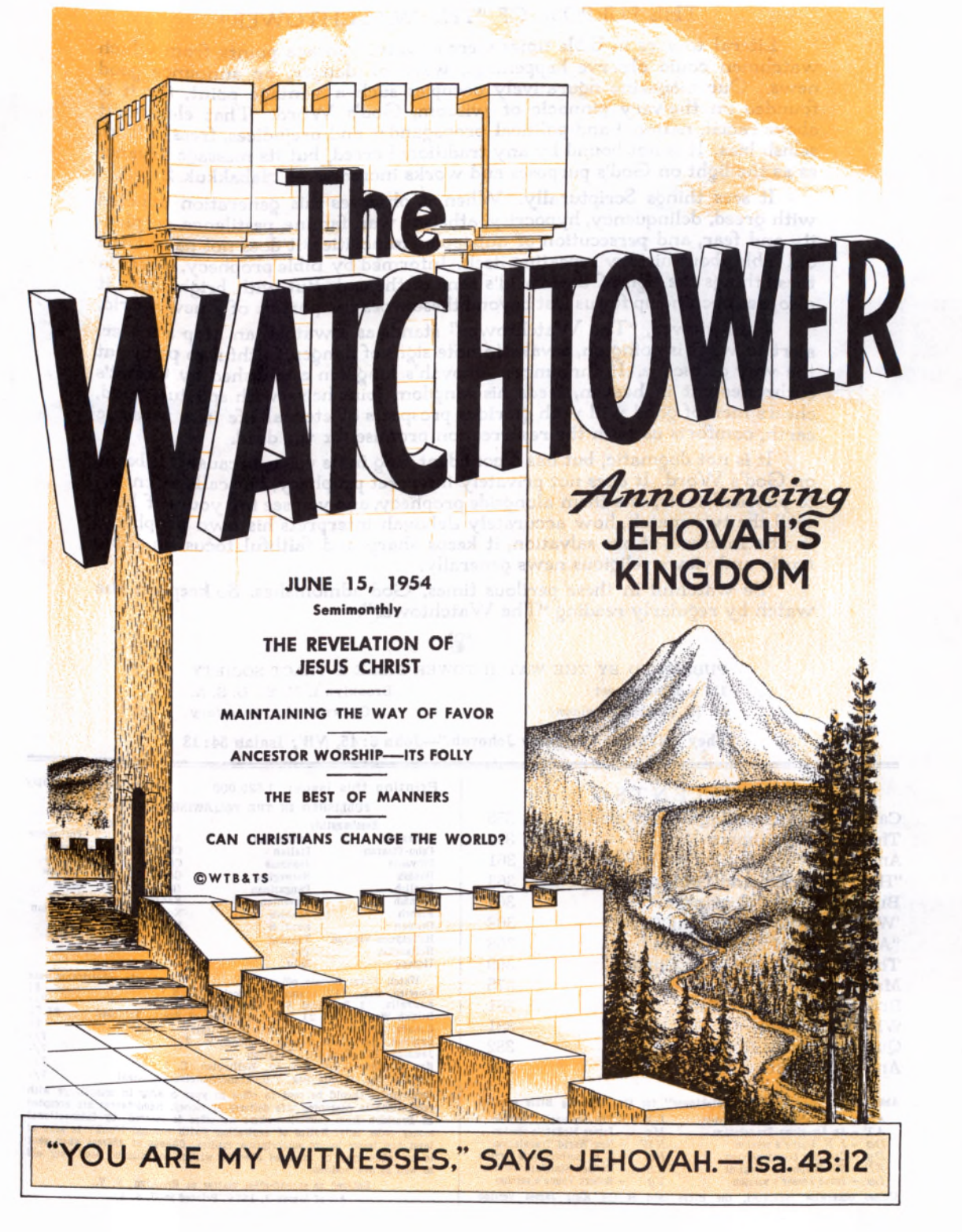




# The WATCHTOWER

*Announcing*  
**JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM**

**JUNE 15, 1954**

Semimonthly

**THE REVELATION OF  
JESUS CHRIST**

**MAINTAINING THE WAY OF FAVOR**

**ANCESTOR WORSHIP—ITS FOLLY**

**THE BEST OF MANNERS**

**CAN CHRISTIANS CHANGE THE WORLD?**

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**"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, NW; Isaiah 54:13

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|                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| AS - American Standard Version | LXX - The Septuagint Version   |
| AT - An American Translation   | Mo - James Moffatt's version   |
| Da - J. N. Darby's version     | NW - New World Translation     |
| Dy - Catholic Douay version    | Ro - J. B. Rotherham's version |
| ED - The Emphatic Diaglott     | RS - Revised Standard Version  |
| Le - Isaac Leeser's version    | Yg - Robert Young's version    |

Unless otherwise indicated, the Bible used is the King James Version

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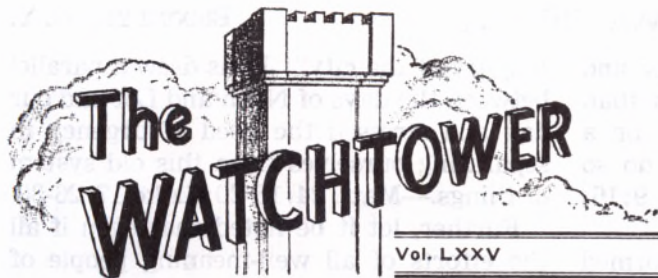
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## CAN CHRISTIANS CHANGE THE WORLD?

**M**OST professed Christians are convinced that Christ's followers must try to change this old world, must try 'to make it a fit place for Christ to come to.' In all earnestness they feel that it is up to them to bring about the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. To this end they try to bring God and Christ into worldly governments, seek to make wars less devastating and deadly or to eliminate them altogether, and endeavor to convert all the pagans to Christendom.

Such are not at all dismayed at the magnitude of the task that lies before them but insist that theirs is a practical, realistic approach to overcoming present inequalities. They consider Jehovah's witnesses, who refuse to take part in such efforts to change this old world, as defeatists, as quitters, and their activity as impractical and unrealistic.

But with Jehovah's witnesses it is not a matter of quitting, it is not a case of defeatism. They never did try to change this old world, and so cannot be charged with quitting from that task. Nor are they defeatists, merely refusing to undertake it because of its magnitude. Jehovah's servants are accustomed to assignments of great magnitude. What a task Noah undertook, to build an ark or chest large enough to accommodate eight persons and hundreds of animals for a whole year! What a job Moses essayed, to lead two million

slaves out of Egypt and to the Promised Land! What an assignment the handful of Jesus' followers were given, to make disciples of people of all nations and to have the good news of God's kingdom preached in all the world!

But to change this old world—Jehovah's servants of today will not take on that task. Why not? Because, in the first place, nowhere in the Scriptures do they find such a commission given them. Importunity and persistency can help them to win only if their efforts are in line with God's purposes. Only for a God-given assignment can they expect God to give them the needed wisdom, strength and protection to carry it out. Christians are not commanded to change the world, but merely to make disciples of people of all nations and to preach in all the world for the purpose of a witness.—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

Secondly, Jehovah's witnesses do not try to change this old world, because it is under the control of Satan the Devil. He is the god of this system of things and it lies in his power. They know they cannot change him nor can they oust him from that control. (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19) To try to do so would be most unrealistic.

A third reason why Jehovah's witnesses do not try to change this old world is that it cannot be reformed. It is honeycombed with corruption, even as was the world of Noah's day. It is like an old moth-eaten garment upon which no new patch can

hold. It loves pleasure more than God and can no more change its bad habits than an Ethiopian can change his skin or a leopard his spots. To endeavor to do so would be most impractical.—Matt. 9:16; Jer. 13:23.

Since this old world cannot be reformed God has doomed it to destruction, a fourth reason why Christians should not try to change it. Its heavens and earth are "stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men." "For Jehovah hath indignation against all the nations, and wrath against all their host."—2 Pet. 3:7, NW; Isa. 34:2, AS.

To try to reform or patch up this old system of things would be to presume that God's judgments against it were not just, that we should cause him to change them. Such an attitude, although it may be as well meant as was Abraham's effort to turn God from destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, will no more succeed than did his. That is why all lovers of righteousness who appreciate the gift of everlasting life are commanded to flee from this old world: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues." To stay with this old system of things is to condone its wickedness, and so deserve the destruction coming upon it. Such would be a most unrealistic course.—Rev. 18:4, NW; Gen. 18:26-32.

Yes, what folly would it have been for Noah to interest himself in trying to change that antediluvian world instead of concentrating on building his boat while sounding God's warning! Had he done that he would have perished in the Flood and we would not be here today! The same is true regarding Lot. Had he insisted on trying to get those Sodomites to turn from their wicked ways and delayed his flight he would have been "swept away in the

iniquity of the city"! Jesus drew a parallel between the days of Noah and Lot and our day and stressed the need of urgency in separating ourselves from this old system of things.—Matt. 24:15-20; Luke 17:26-30.

Further, let it be noted that even if all the efforts of all well-meaning people of all nations were to succeed, bringing about honest government and peace between nations, such could not even begin to compare with that which God's kingdom can and will bring. That kingdom not only assures eternal peace and the end of all oppression, but it will also bring about the end of pain, sorrow, sickness and death, will bring back loved ones from the tomb, and, above all, will succeed in uniting all those that live in the worship of the one true God, Jehovah. Surely all such is infinitely beyond the power and wisdom of men to realize by their own efforts!—Psalm 72; Isa. 11:9; Acts 24:15; Rev. 21:4.

What, then, is more practical and realistic than the message being brought to the people concerning this wonderful kingdom and the need of taking your stand with it before it is too late? Those who take their stand enjoy even now a foretaste of the blessings of that new world, for by becoming part of the New World society they associate with an organization of people that is free from selfish ambition and corruption, that knows no division because of race, color or language, and that obviously has God's blessing upon it.

God has not commissioned Christians to change this old world, but merely to witness to it; we can no more change it than we can change the Devil, and because it cannot reform, God has doomed it to destruction. Our only safety lies in separating from its schemes and placing our hope in God's new world of righteousness, which new world will be as far superior to anything that man can accomplish as the heavens are higher than the earth.



# The BEST OF MANNERS



**C**HRISTIANS should have the best of manners. Their genuine love for God and man prompts their gentle, courteous and kind behavior. As Christians they are ambassadors for God and Christ and thus hold the highest station there is in life. This should be reason enough to stimulate them to proper courtesy. But it has pleased God to make of them "a theatrical spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men." He has put them on exhibition. Therefore, their lives, with their every action, are under constant observation and criticism. They are living examples to the honor or dishonor of God.

Knowing this the apostle Paul reminds them: "Only behave in a manner worthy of the good news about the Christ"; "doing nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others." Peter tells why Christians must so behave: "Maintain your conduct right among the nations, that, in the thing in which they are speaking against you as evildoers, they may as a result of your right works of which they are eyewitnesses glorify God in the day for his inspection. For the Lord's sake subject yourselves to every human creation." This proper behavior is, in essence, good manners. It is the art of knowing how to live with one another in peace. It is that politeness that stems from a love of God and neighbor.—Phil. 1:27; 2:3, 4; 1 Pet. 2:12, 13, NW.

Jesus was the perfect gentleman. Not once did he err in his manners. He practiced perfectly the divine rule of 'do to others as you would have them do to you.' Those who watched him, listened to him, heard his words of wisdom, and saw his mighty acts and graceful manner were filled with astonishment. His good manners did not come from rules laid down in etiquette books written by men, but sprang from a sincere heart and by his cultivating and putting into practice from youth the righteous principles of Almighty God, especially His law of love.—Matt. 13:54-56, NW.

Good manners find their roots in the love of God and the love of man. They cost nothing and are worth everything. Manners, strangely enough, are oftentimes timely words fitly spoken. To say the right thing at the proper moment is an art. It must be natural, from the heart, to be beautiful. It must be spontaneous and sincere if it is to be accepted. Otherwise, it will sound flat, insincere, and it will most likely be considered flattery, which is an insult and not a compliment.

"A beautiful behavior is better than a beautiful form; it gives a higher pleasure than statues and pictures; it is the finest of fine arts." Just as it is possible to be wise without possessing the wisdom of this world, so, too, it is quite possible to be well mannered with little or no knowledge of those rules and forms of worldly books on etiquette, which are at best only a substitute for common sense. Rules of etiquette may change like fashions and are different

in almost every nation, yet good manners are the same throughout the world.

#### SOURCE OF BAD MANNERS

Vanity, a sour disposition, a longing for sympathy, and a want of good common sense are the chief sources from which bad manners spring. Vain people want others to think highly of them, yet they seldom think of others. Their thoughts are always on themselves. Vanity leads to self-consciousness. We must think of others if we are to please Jehovah. To be thoughtful of others, to give attention to their feelings, is the essence of politeness. But an ill-mannered person is often loud, boastful and proud in the praises of himself and his family. Also, ill-mannered is he who boasts of his achievements in business, looks down upon people who are less fortunate than he, and, as a rule, cannot refrain from having his joke at the expense of another's reputation.

Words are dangerous tools. And Jesus warned his disciples to be careful as to the use of them: "Whoever addresses his brother with an unspeakable word of contempt will be accountable to the Supreme Court; whereas whoever says, 'You despicable fool!' will be liable to the fiery Gehenna." He further added that "the good man out of his good treasure sends out good things, whereas the wicked man out of his wicked treasure sends out wicked things. I tell you that every unprofitable saying that men speak, they will render an account concerning it on Judgment Day; for by your words you will be vindicated, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt. 5:22; 12:35-37, NW) A Christian who is well mannered will not call his brother a fool, or stupid, or other uncomplimentary names.

Some think themselves so well-born, so clever, or so rich, as to be above caring

what others say and think of them. They take their position as a license for rudeness. They are an insult to themselves and those who associate with them. There are others who show contempt for their neighbor in various impolite ways: for example, by not being properly dressed in their presence, by not being clean in body and mind, or by indulging in repulsive habits. Paul warns Christians not to associate with such, because "bad associations spoil useful habits."

It is difficult to judge the quality of an egg by its outward appearance. So too, it is not wise to judge people too much by their external manner. Many men have little to wear, others have ill health, some are oppressed and depressed. Nevertheless, we cannot expect people in general to take time to see whether we are what we seem to be. Everyone can be clean. We can speak right things from the heart. We can be friendly, hospitable, kind and courteous. We can be ourselves. We can be honest and polite. These things do not cost anything. They are free. They are for everyone to have—the rich and the poor alike. It is foolish for one to "freeze up" or to roll himself into a prickly ball on the approach of strangers. A Christian must be a conversationalist. He is a talker. He loves people.

#### GOOD MANNERS TOWARD ALL

A well-mannered man is courteous to all kinds of men and under all conditions. He is respectful to his "inferiors" (children, mentally ill, less fortunate, etc.), as well as to his equals (his brothers) and those he regards as his "superiors" (servants in special capacity, rulers, kings and governors). His good manners are not reserved for the few who can pay for them, or who make themselves feared. Like the warm summer sun his kindness and courtesy are for all alike.—1 Pet. 2:13-20.

While it is common practice to treat strangers with more courtesy than friends or family, surely they do not deserve any more in the way of good treatment than those whom we love, do they? Our family and our associates should be even more entitled to considerate treatment than outsiders. Some think good manners are a coat that you put on when you go out to visit with people. But a truly well-mannered person is one who behaves properly all the time.

The place to teach and to learn the best of manners is in the Christian home. A family is a delicate machine whose parts are in intimate contact with one another. Only expert lubrication can keep it in smooth running order. Knowing how to be helpful and courteous, pleasant and polite will go a long way to make a happy home. Learning how to say the accepted, everyday expressions of courtesy and consideration will do much to eliminate destructive friction in our associations. These are little words with big meanings. Everyone can say them properly. They cost us nothing, but with them we buy friends. If we practice good manners daily they will not leave us when we need them most, that is, when we are away from home in public.

For example, during a recent assembly of Jehovah's witnesses a somewhat antagonistic stranger milling through the crowds bumped into a witness. The witness, regaining his balance from the jar, smiled and apologized. The stranger was dumfounded, for he knew it was his fault; yet it was the witness that apologized. The stranger later remarked that it was this courtesy that caused him to think and consider the truth of God's Word. He is now one of Jehovah's witnesses himself.

Another case reported, illustrating the need for being kind and courteous, came from a stranger. Jehovah's witnesses were

in the vicinity for an international convention and traffic congestion was great. This stranger was trying to cross the main highway but the solid line of cars would not let him through. Seeing a car approaching with a sign identifying its owner as one of Jehovah's witnesses, he said to himself, 'I wonder if these people are as kind as it is said they are. Will he let me by?' To his pleasant surprise, the car stopped and let him through. There is a great need for such kindness in this old world and our politeness is not overlooked by it.

Said the Dunellen (N. J.) *Weekly Call*, July 23, 1953: "We are going to miss those Jehovah's witnesses when they are gone. . . . Those folks seem to be the cream of the country when it comes to politeness, courtesy, and a few other things that most of us neglect these days. . . . Those folks are just as polite when they are back of a steering wheel as we are when we are in a hotel lobby, and that is something." An editorial in *The Morning Call* (Allentown, Pa.), July 28, 1953, had this to say about them: "They are a splendid people who are growing in numbers and influence. And wherever they go they are welcome. By their behavior they create such goodly opinion that they are urged to return." A Christian's behavior is either a credit or a discredit to the good name he bears. It honors or dishonors God and Christ.

#### AT MEALTIME

A sure test of one's good manners is when he eats. Does he know when to begin? How to begin? What to say and how to say it? How to eat in accord with the custom of his country, in the way that is accepted there as polite? When to stop? A Christian's mealtime is a time of joy, a time of association; it is a happy occasion. It is not bound by a long list of ridiculous rules, nor is it disorderly. It is a

cheerful time when all are helpful and considerate of one another.

After the prayer is said, the food is to be eaten. No one grabs for the food. They politely help themselves when their turn comes. The amount of food to be taken does not depend on the size of one's appetite, but the size of the family and the amount of food on hand. A very ill-mannered and greedy person will take more than he can eat or take a large portion and leave others with little or nothing to eat. Eating in a way offensive to others, disregarding rules of proper eating customs of the country you live in—all these violations done in the privacy of one's own home cause one to commit errors when in company and evoke such remarks as, "He has poor manners for a Christian." A Christian must stand above reproach.

#### IN APPEARANCE AND SPEECH

It is courteous to try always to look neat. If you are well groomed and always tidy, you speak well of yourself and of your associates. You are showing love and consideration for others. A person observing you may have no opportunity to speak to you, but he will never forget that you were (if you were) pleasing to the eye. A friendly greeting, whether it be a handshake or an embrace or some other customary greeting, and a smile go well with any style of dress that we might wear.

Profanity does not add to one's Christian growth, nor do slang expressions. Vulgar expressions are becoming common. Words once used only by degenerates are now used by some persons in all grades of society. Christians must guard against such. Paul counsels: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every kind or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people, neither shameful conduct nor foolish talking nor obscene jesting, things which are not becoming, but

rather the giving of thanks."—Eph. 5:3, 4, NW; Col. 3:8.

#### IN THE CONGREGATION

When attending a congregational meeting, it is ill-mannered to come late. By being courteous we shall be considerate of the speaker and the congregation. Mothers with children will find it more convenient to sit toward the rear of the hall and near the aisle, so that when the children may find it necessary to leave it will not be so distracting to the speaker or those in attendance. At no time should favoritism be shown to those who may be rich or influential in the world. There must be no partiality because of race, color or nationality. Whispering or giggling during a lecture is distracting to your neighbors. A congregational meeting is where people come to learn, to worship and to serve. Here of all places manners should be at their very best.

In this world starved for kindness, for a little courtesy and politeness, let Christians be found generously casting their deeds of hospitality and good manners upon the waters, because so much of it does return. And the casting in itself is so pleasant and easy and inexpensive. It is so easy to smile and to be agreeable, and even to do the small, kindly things, that there is no excuse for not doing them. And, besides, it is these little kindly things we do each day for one another that promote the beauty of living for everyone.

It must be remembered too that in different lands there are different customs for the people and whatever is polite and becoming is always acceptable. We are not narrow-minded in these comments nor do we mean to say that the way of living in one country must be followed by all Christians in other countries. If all use the spirit of a sound mind they will be kind in their actions to all persons.

# Ancestor Worship

## — ITS FOLLY

WHEN God created man he endowed

man with the instinct or faculty of worship. This accounts for the fact that man, at all times and in all lands, has practiced and continues to practice some form of religion. To direct this faculty or instinct God revealed his will to man. But, as the apostle Paul observes, men, "although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God nor did they thank him, but they became empty-headed in their reasonings and their unintelligent heart became darkened. Although asserting they were wise, they became foolish and turned the glory of the incorruptible God into something like the image of corruptible man" and the lower animals and "exchanged the truth of God for the lie and venerated and rendered sacred service to the creation rather than the One who created, who is blessed forever. Amen."—Rom. 1:21-23, 25, NW.

Turning from the true worship man embraced *naturism*, the worship of the objects of nature; then again he attributed an indwelling spirit to all the things about him, known as *animism*. Taking still another turn his religious instincts caused him to conceive his gods as having human form, attributes and affections, a type of religion known as *anthropomorphism* (Greek, "man-form"). In a sense, ancestor worship may be said to be a form of anthropomorphism, and is based on the belief in "the persistence of the human personality beyond the present life." Practiced by American natives and European peoples in times past it still continues in Asia, Africa and Australia.

Ancestor worship is either communal, as was that practiced by the ancient Romans,

or is of individuals, as is still being practiced in Africa, and

in which the degree of respect given the ancestor depends upon his prominence when alive. Among the notions held are that the dead ancestors cannot feed themselves, that they are more powerful than when they were alive, that they return and are reborn (reincarnated) and that some of them become gods.

The Chaldeans and Assyrians had altars at the heads of their tombs on which they placed food, drinks and precious offerings, indicating ancestor worship. The Egyptian mummies also give evidence of the same. The Greeks, before the time of Homer, worshiped their ancestors. The ancient Romans had their *ma'nes* or worship of "good ones," the spirits of the dead whom they still considered as part of their households and for which two festivals were held annually. Paradoxically, at one of these the *ma'nes* were dispelled from the home by a nocturnal rite, and at the other the *ma'nes* were made welcome to their homes, and food and flowers were carried to the tombs to make peace with the *ma'nes* and retain them as guardians.

Before Japan succumbed to Western "civilization" it had an elaborate annual festival, *Bon*, in honor of the dead ancestors, who were welcomed to return to their homes by many decorations and food dainties. Today ancestor worship is still more or less practiced in Japan. China, perhaps more than any other country, has been devoted to the worship of ancestors. There



it is claimed to go back some two thousand years before Christ. Among the characteristics of their festivals in honor of the dead were fasting and meditating on the traits and appearances of one's ancestors. Confucius, in spite of his reputed wisdom, was a strong advocate of ancestor worship.

The 1954 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* tells about ancestor worship in Basutoland, Africa: "About sixty per cent of the population of nearly 600,000 are 'Christianized,' but that does not stop them from being ancestor worshipers. Sacrifices are made to pacify the dead chiefs and forefathers. Clergymen play a big part in these ceremonies and the witch doctors an even larger part. The people are assured that their deceased parents can really help them against their enemies."

Ancestors were worshiped for various reasons: to keep them from becoming angry because of neglect, to win their favor and have them act as guardians of the home, to have them cause it to rain and ensure good crops, to cure illness or give advice by means of dreams, to make one be fruitful, to have offspring and to intercede with the "gods."

#### WHY ANCESTOR WORSHIP IS FOLLY

Why may ancestor worship be included in the foolish things mentioned by Paul at Romans 1:21-25? Because, first of all, only Jehovah God is to be worshiped and feared. "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service." And he brooks no rivals, for he "is a God exacting exclusive devotion." For him to tolerate rivals would be for him to deny his supremacy, which he cannot do.—Matt. 4:10; Deut. 6:14, 15; 2 Tim. 2:13, NW.

In ancestor worship the parents are considered as always being right. But according to God's Word God comes first and when an issue arises between God and an-

cestor we must obey God rather than men. In fact, Jesus warned of the division that his message of truth would bring between parents and children among his followers. To go contrary to God's law is folly.—Matt. 10:35; Acts 5:29.

Further, ancestor worship is folly because not only do ancestors not constitute a sure guide, but, being out of existence, they are in no position either to help or to harm. The Bible's testimony is unequivocal on this point, beliefs of Christendom to the contrary notwithstanding. It plainly tells us that upon creation "man came to be a living soul," not that he received a soul separate and distinct from his body; and that "the soul that sins shall die." (Gen. 2:7, NW; Ezek. 18:4, RS) It assures us that in the very day that a man dies his thoughts perish and that in Sheol, gravedom, the location of the dead, "there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom."—Eccl. 9:5, 10, RS; Ps. 146:3, 4.

But does not the Bible state that at death "the spirit returns to God who gave it"? Yes, it does, at Ecclesiastes 12:7 (RS), but that spirit is not the soul, but the breath, the power of life. How do we know? Because nothing is said about the spirit as having been good, but merely that the dust returns to the earth and, by contrast, the spirit or breath, representing here the power of life, returns to God who gave it. To God who gave it? Yes, because he gave it to man in the first place in Eden when he blew into man's nostrils this breath of life. This is the spirit to which Jesus referred when he said, as he hung on the torture stake: "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit."—Luke 23:46, NW; Gen. 2:7.

There are some who hold that 'ancestor worship is the oldest form of religious emotion and the foundation of all civilized religion.' But in view of the foregoing it is apparent that such could be true only of non-Biblical religions. That is why histo-

rians themselves are obliged to make an exception, stating that "the worship of the Semitic peoples, the Hebrews and the Arabs, as history knows them, is remarkably free from ancestor deification," although these profess to detect a similarity between the law of Moses and ancestor worship, much as the evolutionist professes to see a similarity between the simians and man. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* lists the arguments for and against the modernist view that ancestor worship was the predecessor of the law of Moses, and, while holding that the Bible does not settle the question (which it does, as we have seen above), states that it is a matter for anthropology and that its evidence is against ancestor worship as being the primitive form of religion.

As regards ancestor worship as being folly it might not be amiss to observe that it has also done much harm in a material way. For example, consider China. Why does it present the paradox of having one of the oldest civilizations and yet being one of the most backward of countries? Simply because of the blight of ancestor worship, a curse affecting its arts, economics and politics. It might therefore be stated that the onus for the war in Indo-China and for China's being Communist can be laid squarely upon this form of religion. And the role that Japan played in World War II

can likewise be blamed squarely on ancestor worship, for it is the very soul and basis of Shinto. And is not the caste system with which India is afflicted simply another form of ancestor worship?

Incidentally, let us note that in avoiding the folly of ancestor worship we need not go to the other extreme, so marked in Western lands, particularly the United States, where the public press almost daily tells of youths' not only being disobedient to their parents but of their beating, robbing and even murdering them. "Honor your father and mother" is still one of God's laws, and so long as children and youths are dependent upon their parents they should obey them, provided, of course, the commands of the parents are in harmony with God's will.—Eph. 6:1, 2, NW.

What we have seen regarding ancestor worship certainly bears out the accuracy of Paul's words that when man turned away from the worship of the true God Jehovah 'he became empty-headed in his reasoning and his foolish heart became darkened.' In striking contrast with the folly of ancestor worship is the fear and knowledge of Jehovah, which is the beginning of wisdom and which wisdom is demonstrated by the members of the New World society throughout the earth in both word and action.—Ps. 111:10, AS.

### "HOLY HORRORS" AND "PIOUS JUNK"

Selling religious ware to the devout and pious has become an exceedingly profitable business. There are St. Christopher money clips, St. Anthony key chains, "rosary clickers," beads that contain water from a so-called miraculous fountain and even glowing-in-the-dark crucifixes. A few Catholic authorities have had the courage to come out and admit that selling religious gadgets is a "good racket." Recently the Archbishop Richard J. Cushing, in a radio address, strongly warned against purchasing "holy horrors." He went on to list as "pious junk" and "pious rubbish" such articles as "crosses that glow in the dark, religious pictures with eyes that follow you around the room, water from a holy hydrant, vials of miracle anointing oils." The archbishop added: "It's an insult to your intelligence; it's money spent for holy horrors. These things belittle Catholic devotion and encourage superstition."—New Bedford, Massachusetts, *Standard-Times*, March 23, 1954.

# BIG BRAZIL SEES EXPANSION

**P**ORTO ALEGRE, the center of commercial activity for the two southernmost states of Brazil, received its first visit by a president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society when, on January 3, N. H. Knorr and a director of the Society, M. G. Henschel, arrived. This southern point of the country is very much like Uruguay and Argentina and has the same cowboys or *gauchos*. Many of these countryfolk traveled by train and bus for as many as 600 miles to the assembly that was opened on January 2. Brothers Knorr and Henschel arrived Sunday at 3:00 p.m., about an hour after an all-morning cloudburst which thoroughly soaked the earth and many of the conventioners who were not so fortunate as to get a taxi. The rain brought such a cold spell that the baptism scheduled for 9:00 a.m. had to be moved over to Monday, the last day of the assembly, when Brothers Knorr and Henschel were to speak to the brothers.

But it did clear up for the Sunday public lecture "After Armageddon—God's New World," and a local brother gave it to 645 gathered in assembly in the Exposition Pavilion of the Ministry of Agriculture. Just two years ago an assembly was held in the same place with an attendance of half that number.

When Monday morning dawned the sun was bright and the heat it generated licked up the remaining puddles and dried up the grounds around the palm-thatched cafete-

ria, where more than 400 brothers ate their meals on wooden tables and benches. After breakfast the front seats in the hall were reserved for the ones being baptized. There 115 persons who were to be baptized in the bay not far away heard the talk made directly to them. Of these, 40 were men and 75 were women. All conventioners were encouraged to see so many people from their midst dedicating themselves to the new-world ministry work.

In the evening 445 brothers and people of good will stayed for the climax of the assembly when Brother Henschel first spoke for two hours through his interpreter followed by Brother Knorr in like manner. These brothers in the south were very glad and bade these representatives to return as soon as possible.

The ten banners strung up all the way across the streets in most cases received many comments. Groups of people gathered at some points to discuss the word *Armageddon* in the title, and the meaning of the word itself aroused one storekeeper to take off part of this Sunday to come to hear the lecture out of curiosity over the meaning of the word. When the brothers came to take the sign down the following Tuesday he said he heard that lecture and he would like to live in God's new world. Maybe he will if he follows through on his wish. At any rate some of the brothers arranged to call back on him. Many show windows in the center of town received the window cards offered by the



brothers and over a thousand were placed in that manner. Local newspapers all over those two states, dozens of them, carried articles announcing the assembly and during the assembly many of the local city papers published articles. One published pictures of the baptism. In most cases they accepted the write-ups and a good witness was given through an explanation of Bible doctrine.

Brothers Knorr and Henschel, accompanied by the branch servant, were up bright and early on the sixth of January so as to catch their airplane for Rio de Janeiro, center of the federal government, and also where the branch home and factory are located. At 1:30 p.m. the picturesque harbor of Rio de Janeiro, Guanabara Bay, hove into sight. One of the busiest ports in the world, Rio showed the travelers what seemed like hundreds of steamships from all corners of the earth waiting for their chance to tie up at the docks. For the third time Brother Knorr was seeing the famous Sugar Loaf Mountain from the air. Then down went the plane to land at Aeroporto Santos Dumont, situated right in the heart of the city on some land that extends out into the bay. And yes, there in the ultramodern terminal building was a whole group of happy Gilead graduates and native brothers waiting to give warm greetings to the world travelers from headquarters.

After exchanging greetings Brothers Knorr and Henschel were off in the Society's station wagon to get their first view of the new two-story factory and office building constructed in 1953 and another view of the Bethel home which had been remodeled since their last visit to the country in 1949. This time instead of an iron picket fence there was a white wall in the form of a watchtower and parapet, giving the building a very striking appear-

ance. It was all in keeping with the theocratic expansion.

During the visit to Brazil in March, 1945, Brother Knorr found 354 publishers, which number rose to 1,900 at the last visit during April, 1949. This time he was pleased to find that the number of ministers has now risen to 6,429. The tireless efforts of the many missionaries and local publishers of the good news produced much fruit.

The two visiting brothers spent the rest of that day, Wednesday, and Thursday going over the branch records and working out the problems of expansion in the vast territory, even greater than that of the United States.

In the meantime, the final preparations for the greatest assembly in the history of Jehovah's witnesses in Brazil were being carried to a successful climax. Although difficulty in finding an adequate place was encountered, arrangements had been made to use a large enclosed area, a sports playground, the Praça de Esportes da Associação dos Servidores Cívicos.

Brothers from all over the country had heard the call to come to Rio and on Wednesday afternoon a special plane came in from Salvador to the north with fifty brothers aboard. It was a trip of over 700 miles. Especially moving was the fact that some of the elderly brothers and sisters that came had hardly ever traveled outside their own city by bus and had never been in an airplane before. Others from the north came in by train a week ahead of time. It was a long and arduous journey of six days and nights on train with facilities more like the days of the wild west of the nineteenth century: the trains still burn wood in Brazil and are narrow gauge. It took one pioneer a month and a half to get to the convention, stopping in cities along the way to give a witness. Two special trains brought 1500 conventioners

from the big capital of São Paulo and one special train brought about 250 brothers and people of good will down from the mountainous mining state of Minas Gerais. Others came by special bus and private car. So it was not surprising to find 2,625 present for the opening talk. Above the entrance to the field a large banner saying, "Welcome to the New World Society Assembly," greeted every visitor. To reach the platform one walked through an aisle of giant "ficus" trees that gave refreshing respite from the hot sun of the tropical summer. The weather was ideal for an outdoor assembly.

Already the newspapers, seven radio stations, 300 signs in buses, along with 1,800 window signs, were calling the public's attention to the gathering of Jehovah's people.

The day's program went well with informative talks setting the theme of living according to principles of the New World society. The climax of the first day arrived with Brother Henschel's talk "Lies Lead to Loss of Life." Underneath the giant trees that stretched their arms toward the heavens, 3,243 persons gave attentive ear to the mature Christian counsel on controlling the tongue to speak only the truth and on dealing truthfully with one another. Happily content with much more information to give them a solid basis for confidence in the theocratic organization, they sang the final song underneath starry tropical skies.

Saturday would be the big day of the baptism. The assembly grounds were within walking distance of the Atlantic Ocean. There near Copacabana, under the brilliant morning sun, 457 brothers and sisters walked across the stretch of white sand beach to take their turn of being immersed in the blue-green waters. Brazil has a mixture of peoples, so there were peoples of many races in the group.

Brother Knorr had invited all the Gilead graduates to a luncheon in the Bethel home, and after an hour of happy fellowship all of them considered together the expansion of the work and what could be done by them to push out into other fields. It was decided to break down the larger eight- and nine-member groups now present in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo into smaller groups and go out into the cities of the interior with the aim in mind of starting new congregations. Everyone felt as though this was a big step forward in reaching the sixty million people in Brazilian territory. After being in the same place for some time the missionaries expressed their willingness to be on the move again to new fields of theocratic expansion.

The time passed so rapidly that the circuit servant and the two visiting brothers had to be hustled off in the station wagon to the assembly grounds in time for the meeting with all the circuit servants at 4:30 p.m.

Using an interpreter Brother Knorr explained the necessity for more attention to the work in the field. Arrangements were made to have a short two-day meeting with all the circuit servants in the branch office, to bring all to the same meeting of the mind, thus leading to greater unification of the work in the field. The possibilities of teaching the congregations reading and writing and of establishing schools were discussed and found a necessity. In some sections in the north of Brazil not all have educational opportunities. Sometimes 75 per cent do not read or write, and this is a handicap. Arrangements were discussed for bringing on more special pioneers and mature ones to take up special service with the Society. Brother Knorr showed the necessity of pushing ahead the preaching of the good news on a greater scale than ever before. There will now be fifteen circuits in Brazil in order to cover the circuit

itineraries once every four months, each servant having ten congregations along with many isolated people to visit.

Finished with this special meeting, Brother Knorr went to the microphone with his interpreter to give a forcefully appealing discourse on "Make Your Advancement Manifest to All Persons." It appealed to the individual publisher and to the individual person of good will, and was based on 1 Timothy 4:15, 16. The New World society is advancing, so all should get into it and stay there, progressing with it. Many times the Brazilian brothers and all present expressed their appreciation for the Scriptural admonition by applauding. They understood the points made. This was the first time that the majority had the opportunity to hear the president of the Watch Tower Society speak and it seemed that the information given was just the thing needed. It transmitted the very spirit of the theocratic expansion program to have every person desiring life in the new world manifest his progress by works, within the congregation and publicly.

As always seems the case the last day of the assembly came too soon. The assembly grounds were replete with thousands of theocratic publishers and their friends. Jehovah must have looked down with pleasure on that center of theocratic activity. Brother Henschel's talk on "The Day for Salvation" strengthened the brothers for the future burning tests of integrity at the hands of the Devil's organization. Brother Knorr followed up by forcefully proving that "Love Is Practical." Then, seeing that the two North American visitors were going to leave later that same day, the Brazilian brothers and people of good will said good-by to Brother Knorr, and when he asked whether to take their love to the Brooklyn Bethel family and to all others along the way he was greeted

with a resounding burst of applause. He commended the wonderful progress shown by the organization but also showed the necessity of greater distribution of the *Watchtower* magazine, each publisher distributing at least a hundred copies a year. Invitations were given to enter the special pioneer service. On announcing that the Society was buying a new linotype machine and that *Awake!* in Portuguese would be larger, equal in size to *The Watchtower*, the audience clapped with happiness. The theme was expansion. With the new machinery some of the present Bethel force could enter the circuit or special pioneer work. As soon as the barriers on importation of literature could be raised, more bound books would be sent to Brazil. The audience regretted hearing Brother Knorr say his last word. They showed their appreciation for his coming, hoping that he would return again soon.

The weather continued to be dry and hot and the climax of the New World Society Assembly in Rio arrived with 5,443 present to hear a Brazilian brother deliver the talk "After Armageddon—God's New World." This combined with the attendance of 645 in Porto Alegre brought the total audience to 6,088, giving a grand opening to 1954, remembering too the total of 572 that were baptized.

It can be said with certainty that this was the best and the biggest theocratic assembly ever held in the country and was well recognized by the press, television, radio and magazines.

The manager of the sports field, who had been a little nervous and irritable about the whole affair the first day, told the brothers after the cleanup of the assembly grounds: "You people can come here every three months if you want to. Why, the two football teams of just 22 men practicing give me more work than thousands of you witnesses." So, that night,

January 10, the thousands who had come to meet together in Jehovah's name and to bless it went back to their more than sixty cities, carrying with them the satisfying hope of the new world and a much clearer vision of what it means to live as a New World society.

At the same time Brothers Knorr and Henschel were waiting for their airliner at the Galeão International airport, outside of Rio, to carry them on the next leg of their journey, over the vast reaches of the South American continent to another theocratic outpost on the island of Trinidad.



## 'What You Sow You Will Reap'

**I**N THE December 7, 1953, Des Moines, Iowa, *Tribune* appeared the results of a survey made among clergymen regarding what was their biggest problem. Among the answers were: "Spiritual drowsiness of the congregation." "Indifference." "Apathy toward church work." "Lukewarm Christianity which leads to all kinds of problems." "Getting church folk to do personal evangelization work. So many are timid, afraid." "The larger the church, the less zeal and activity usually is shown." And so on.

And under the heading, "Churches Held Failing to Fulfill Purposes," *The Daily Times Herald*, Dallas, Texas, February 3, 1954, reported on the remarks made by Boston University president, Harold C. Case, at the Southern Methodist University's 19th annual Ministers' Week. Mr. Case warned clergymen against becoming so absorbed in the development of their church as an institution that they overlooked its real purpose. "Budgets

may receive more attention than the Bible and competition for 'a place in the sun' may be more captivating than co-operation or fulfilling the condition of the Kingdom of God on earth." He further observed that "people expect [the clergymen] to be religious and to pose and use great words without rigorous self-examination. Ministers, in some cases, are losing sight of their objective by over-interest in their salaries, positions and advancements."

Can it be that there is a cause and effect relationship between the clergy's being engrossed in such matters as salaries, position and advancement and their parishioners' apathy, drowsiness, indifference and lukewarmness? Can it be that in stressing their budgets more than their Bibles the very clergy who complain about their parishioners' condition are merely seeing in their congregation a reflection of themselves, are merely reaping what they have sown?—Gal. 6:7.

## "A Relaxed Holiday Crowd"

Christendom's churches have become so self-satisfied that nothing short of a "spiritual atomic bomb" will shatter the "complacency." This was the recent statement of Dr. John Sutherland Bonnell, pastor of New York's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Revealingly, the pastor declared that "in a time of world-shaking revolution, the church's membership acts as though the whole world were basking in ease and safety. We still sing 'like a mighty army moves the church of God,' but the discipline and urgency pictured by these words is wholly lacking." Then the pastor exclaimed: "The church today resembles a relaxed holiday crowd much more than an army on the march." (New York Times, March 1, 1954) True, but soon the holiday will be over. Armageddon comes on apace and will catch these so-called "Christians" sleepily relaxing, as Christ's apostle foretold.—1 Thess. 5:2, 6.

# The Revelation of Jesus Christ

**F**OR many centuries sincere and honest-hearted persons have longed for the return of Christ. Just how he would come and exactly what would occur at that time have not been too clear to many, but the prospect of realizing the promised blessings has filled them with hope. Although it has been spoken of as a time of judgment and of the end of the world, their hope has not been misplaced, because it is also foretold as a time of deliverance. But this salvation will not come automatically as a result of "good behavior." Neither will the presence of that day be so easily recognized that all will know judgment is in progress. An accurate study of the Scriptures discloses that when the revelation of Jesus Christ comes it will catch most of the world unaware.

<sup>2</sup> Why is this so? Was the only warning man was to receive sounded when Jesus was on earth? Did he indicate that at the end of the world he would suddenly appear unannounced and immediately hold all people accountable? Some religious-minded persons insist that Christ will not have arrived until he visibly appears out of the clouds with his angels and subjects all people to a fiery judgment. These same persons believe that judgment will be entered on the basis of moral behavior or on the acceptance of the preaching of "Christ crucified" or of "Jesus, and the resurrection." (1 Cor. 1:23; Acts 17:18) Such un-

*"Brace up your minds for activity, keep completely balanced and set your hope upon the undeserved kindness that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*

—1 Pet. 1:13, NW.

derstanding, however, is purely human reasoning and not based on an accurate knowledge of God's Word.

<sup>3</sup> The Bible shows

clearly that before anyone would be brought to complete responsibility a way of preparation would be made before the Lord. Only when those earnestly seeking the Lord would have an opportunity to recognize that he is present in his kingdom would he suddenly appear to hold an accounting. The Scriptures show further that this first responsibility would not be with the nations but rather with the "house of God." (1 Pet. 4:17; Mal. 3:1-5) Then, Jesus pointed out, a full and complete warning would be given in all the inhabited earth. And what does he say will be preached? Not primarily his "crucifixion" or staking, and not primarily his resurrection. While these are important doctrines of the Bible and have a definite bearing on the climax of God's purpose and judgment today, nevertheless the resurrection of Jesus was given as a sign of Christ's *first* presence and has been preached ever since then. Now he says: "And this good news of the *kingdom* will be preached in all the inhabited earth for the purpose of a witness to all the nations, and then the accomplished end will come." (Matt. 24:14, NW) It is the good news that this kingdom has been established that Paul speaks of in his second letter to the Thessalonians. There he is discussing "the

1, 2. What has been the hope of sincere persons, and how have some religious-minded persons viewed the matter?

3. (a) When and where does responsibility before the Lord arrive first? (b) What is to be preached worldwide, and on what does responsibility at Jesus' revelation depend?

revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings due punishment upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thess. 1:7, 8, NW) Responsibility at the revelation of Jesus Christ, therefore, depends on whether one accepts or rejects the good news of the presence of the Kingdom that Jesus said would be preached world-wide.

<sup>4</sup> Why, then, do the nations not realize and accept the approach of this climax of judgment? It is because they have not heeded the world-wide advertising of Christ's return and his second presence. Since long before World War I Jehovah's witnesses pointed to 1914 as the time for this great event to occur. And since 1914 physical evidences establishing this truth have been pointed to repeatedly in the columns of *The Watchtower*. The nations continue to ignore this sign and refuse to recognize that a time of judgment is even now in progress. They cannot see that Christ appeared in the temple in 1918 and judgment has already been entered against two classes of lawless ones whom he found there. (Matt. 24:48-51; 2 Thess. 2:8) They have not observed since then a division going on among the people—a separation that is being made before their very eyes. (Matt. 25:31-33) They willfully close their ears to the warning message that a climax of judgment is fast approaching when Jesus Christ will be so completely revealed to the world that his presence will be indisputable. It is this indisputable evidence of his presence that brings destruction, because he reveals himself in the execution of adverse judgment through the war of Armageddon. That is why Peter admonishes: "Hence brace up your minds for activity, keep completely balanced and set

your hope upon the undeserved kindness that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:13, NW) With our eternal destinies in the balance the course of wisdom would dictate gaining all the knowledge possible about this promised return visit of Jehovah's righteous representative before he is revealed in execution of judgment. Acting upon that right kind of knowledge is the only sure way of defense.—Eccl. 7:12.

#### DEMONSTRATING THE PATTERN

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah never judges anyone guilty without a fair trial. He clearly points out his will to man and gives man full opportunity to show a good and right heart by adhering to it. He even makes repeated warnings to those who are prone to ignore him. But his judgments are sure and swift when guilt has been established. Throughout the history of his dealings with mankind in judgment this same pattern presents itself. Two examples which are given as types of Christ's second presence should serve to demonstrate this pattern.—2 Pet. 2:5, 6.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted in this connection that there are three distinct phases or aspects to any visitation or advent of a righteous representative of Jehovah in time of judgment. The entire period of the advent is referred to as the presence. Then there is a time when the purpose of the presence becomes clearly manifest. It is a time for judgment to begin on all Christians. Finally there is a climax of the purpose of the presence, which is the execution of judgment. This is a time of revelation because the purpose of the visit is now clearly seen in the deliverance of those favorably judged and in the destruction of those found unworthy of salvation.

5. What pattern has Jehovah set in judgment?

6. What three aspects are there to any advent of Jehovah's representative in judgment?

4. What have the nations failed to recognize today?

<sup>7</sup> First consider the presence of Noah in the period before the flood. The earth had become filled with violence so that it was ruined in God's sight and he purposed to destroy it. The history of Noah's sons recorded at Genesis chapter 6 and beginning with verse 9 (NW) says: "Noah was a righteous man. He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with God." While the very presence of righteous Noah condemned the generation in which he lived, Jehovah mercifully gave warning of his purpose to destroy that world and showed a way of escape through his representative that he was sending. "After that God said to Noah: 'The end of all flesh has come before me, because the earth is full of violence as a result of them, and here I am bringing them to ruin together with the earth. Make for yourself an ark.'" (Gen. 6:13, 14, NW) This giving of advance notice to Noah would mark the beginning of "the days of Noah" or the time of Noah's presence during which period Noah served as a "preacher of righteousness." (2 Pet. 2:5) The people of that time certainly knew Noah was there and that he was preaching, but they paid no attention.

<sup>8</sup> Then the day arrived when Jehovah God took Noah, his family and all the animals into the ark. This was certainly a manifestation of divine favor but still not recognized by any of those scoffers who had consistently ignored the advance warning. During the time of this manifestation and Noah's going into the ark the way was still open—but not for long. "After that Jehovah shut the door behind him." (Gen. 7:16, NW) The judgment of all in the earth at that time was now sealed. Jehovah had given evidence of his favor to

Noah and now proceeded to give evidence of wrath against all who had not recognized Noah's righteous presence. The flood was an unmistakable climax of the truthfulness of Noah's preaching and a revelation to the wicked world in which he lived. So it will be at Christ's second presence.

<sup>9</sup> Lot also stands out in judgment against a people. Peter has this to say about Lot, who was a temporary resident in Sodom: "[God] delivered righteous Lot, who was greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people in loose conduct—for that righteous man by what he saw and heard while dwelling among them from day to day was tormenting his righteous soul by reason of their lawless deeds." (2 Pet. 2:7, 8, NW) Because of the wickedness of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah Jehovah sent his angels to bring a judgment of condemnation against them. Lot made an attempt to persuade the Sodomites to adhere to the righteousness of God, but they scorned him with the words, "This lone man came here to reside awhile and yet he would actually play the judge." Lot then tried to persuade his prospective sons-in-law to flee with him for protection. "He kept on saying: 'Get up! Get out of this place, because Jehovah is destroying the city!' But in the eyes of his sons-in-law he seemed like a man who was joking." —Gen. 19:9, 14, NW.

<sup>10</sup> No doubt they still thought he was joking when the angels of Jehovah took Lot and his wife and two daughters by the hand and led them out of the city. They did not recognize it as a manifestation of Jehovah's favor until fire came down upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This revelation of the presence of Jehovah's angels with righteous Lot was too late for their salvation. Jesus clearly links his own revela-

7. When did the time of Noah's presence begin, and how was Jehovah's mercy expressed?

8. How did Noah receive evidence of Jehovah's favor and how was the righteousness of Noah's presence revealed?

9. What attitude and course of action did Lot take toward the Sodomites?

10. What does Jesus clarify as to his own revelation through the example of Sodom's destruction?

tion with execution of judgment when he climaxed his account of Lot's deliverance by saying: "But on the day that Lot came out of Sodom it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all. The same way it will be on that day when the Son of man is to be revealed."—Luke 17:29, 30, NW.

#### PRESENCE, MANIFESTATION, REVELATION

<sup>11</sup> The Christian Greek Scriptures make a clear distinction between the three phases or aspects of Christ's second advent by using a different Greek word in each instance. The word *parousia* is consistently translated "presence" in the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* because that is the actual meaning of the word in the original. As applied to the second coming of Christ it is used to indicate either the years of the beginning of his visit or to refer to the entire time he is with mankind. This time began in 1914 and means that Christ is now present though invisible.

<sup>12</sup> A second word, *epipháneia*, translated "manifestation," means appearing, manifestation or a coming to light or to view. The use of this word points to Christ's appearance in the temple for judgment in 1918 and marks the beginning of favorable judgment, first, in the resurrection of the anointed already asleep in death (2 Tim. 4:8) and, second, in the entrusting of Kingdom interests to those of the anointed found faithful on earth.

<sup>13</sup> The third word, *apokálypsis*, which is translated "revelation," means a disclosure, taking off the covering, or uncovering. When this word is used it indicates that a clear and unobstructed view is meant, and in connection with Christ's second

presence it refers to the time his manifestation is turned into an unmistakable revelation at Armageddon and even the unwilling are forced to recognize his presence.

<sup>14</sup> It is significant to note also in regard to the pattern that has been set that each presence is accompanied by an outstanding sign. This serves to identify the representative of Jehovah and establish him as having authority. Also it serves to clarify the purpose of the visit as well as to fix the responsibility of the people. This becomes evident in considering the first presence of Jesus Christ. Many things had been foretold by the Jewish prophets that would be fulfilled in the Messiah. However, until he presented himself it would be impossible to determine accurately just how he would accomplish the purpose of his visit, or, for that matter, just what the full purpose of his presence would be. For this reason the self-wise religious leaders among the Jews stumbled at Christ's first presence, endeavoring to read into the prophecies interpretations of their own that did not conform to God's will in sending his Messiah. Their minds had not been braced up by the patterns that had been recorded and they were not prepared for the kind of activity the presence of the Messiah in their midst called for. Looking only for self-exaltation through a return of Davidic kingdom rule they could not see that a "first" presence of the promised King was necessary. Neither could they recognize when he did appear that this presence would accomplish deliverance for them far beyond their own private expectations.

#### FIXING THE RESPONSIBILITY

<sup>15</sup> Jesus' first advent was to accomplish a twofold purpose. It was of secondary im-

11. What is the meaning of *parousia*, and what does it indicate as to Christ's second coming?

12. What does the word *epipháneia* mean, and to what does it point as to faithful Christians then?

13. What does *apokálypsis* mean, and to what does it refer at Christ's return?

14. Why does an outstanding sign accompany each visit, and what caused the Jewish leaders to stumble at Christ's first presence?

15. What was the primary reason for Jesus' first presence?

portance that he came to provide a ransom for mankind. (Matt. 20:28) The primary reason was that he might prove his integrity to the One who sent him and establish the universal sovereignty of Jehovah. In doing so he would through much suffering thereby establish his right to inherit the Kingdom. (Heb. 2:18; 5:8) This righteous course in itself was a sign to Israel. It showed his ministry was one of vindication and salvation.

<sup>16</sup> It was this ministry of preaching and healing that condemned those of Israel even though Jesus had not come for judgment of the world. He said: "I was not sent forth to any but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 15:24, NW) The apostle John testifies they would not accept his works: "He came to his own home, but his own people did not take him in." (John 1:11, NW) An example of this is shown in the account of Jesus' healing of the man blind from birth. The Jews had already agreed among themselves that if anyone accepted Jesus as the Christ or Messiah, then that one should be expelled from the congregation. The healed man boldly testified to the miracle and admitted belief that Jesus must be a prophet. The Pharisees reviled him and said: "You are a disciple of that man, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man we do not know where he is from." "In answer the man said to them: 'This certainly is a marvel, that you do not know where he is from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, he listens to this one. From of old it has never

been heard that anyone opened the eyes of one born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing at all.' In answer they said to him: 'You were altogether born in sins, and yet are you teaching us?' And they threw him out!" Eventually Jesus heard that the man had been put out of the congregation and when he found him he asked him if he was putting faith in the Son of man. The healed man answered that he was and did obeisance to Jesus and then Jesus said: "For this judgment I came into this world: that those not seeing might see and those seeing might become blind." "Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and they said to him: 'We are not blind also, are we?' Jesus said to them: 'If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you say, "We see." Your sin remains.'"—John 9:28-41, NW.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus showed by these words that a spiritual healing also was in progress which could deliver them from condemnation due to sin or which, if rejected, would leave them under God's wrath. The Pharisees, however, continued to hold on stubbornly to their own conception of what evidences would indicate the arrival of the

Messiah. "Here the Pharisees and Sadducees approached him and, to tempt him, they asked him to display to them a sign from heaven. In reply he said to them: ' . . . A wicked and adulterous generation keeps on seeking for a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah.' " (Matt.

16:1-4, NW) They had in mind the prophecy of Daniel that foretold the sign of the Son of man and were insisting that it be fulfilled in their day if they were to believe the Messiah was present. Obvious-



16. How did Jesus' healing of the blind man establish the condemnation of Israel?

17. What evidence of the Messiah were the Jewish religionists seeking, and what did they request of Jesus?

ly they were not interested in the coming of Christ as a representative of Jehovah. To them the promised Messiah was coming only to serve their own selfish interests.

<sup>18</sup> However, in spite of the fact that Jesus' preaching and healing works were sufficient to convince right-hearted ones (Luke 7:18-23), he gave the nation an outstanding sign by which they could recognize that certainly he was the one sent by God. "No sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. For just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish three days and three nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights."—Matt. 12:39, 40, NW.

<sup>19</sup> But did the religionists welcome this sign and accept it in evidence? Did they now discern that through the resurrection Jesus had been justified in the spirit and hence the primary purpose of his first presence had been accomplished? On the contrary. When the time came for the sign to appear they tried to prevent it by causing Pilate to put a seal on the tomb and posting a guard of soldiers. Their ruse failed miserably, however, and then in an effort to hide their hypocrisy they added to their guilt by trying to obscure the significance of the sign. When the soldiers on guard at the tomb reported on the events of Jesus' resurrection, "they gave a sufficient number of silver pieces to the soldiers and said: 'Say, "His disciples came in the night and stole him while we were sleeping."'" (Matt. 28:12, 13; 27:62-66, NW) Hence the sign of Jesus' first presence not only identified him as the tried and proved Messiah but also served to fix the responsibility of both Jews and Gentiles through the preaching of the disciples.

18. What sign did Jesus indicate would establish his first presence?

19. How did the Jewish leaders react to the sign, and what further did the sign serve?

<sup>20</sup> Modern-day Christendom is following this same pattern. She claims to be looking for the return of Christ just as the Jews claimed to be looking for his advent then. And just as the Pharisees and Sadducees demanded a sign, ignoring all the evidences that Christ was already in their midst, so the many sects of Christendom turn blind eyes to the sign of Christ's second presence and insist upon awaiting the sign of his revelation, which can mean only their destruction.

<sup>21</sup> They are in fact refusing the very sign the Jews were seeking in their day, the "sign of the Son of man" foretold by Daniel. (Dan. 7:13, 14) This sign over which the Jews stumbled was definitely pointed to by Jesus himself as evidence that he would be present among men the second time. "And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will go to wailing and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:30, NW) Since Daniel links the sign with the giving of the Kingdom it is obviously a sign pointing to the beginning of Christ's presence and his coming into his kingdom. This could not occur until his return, and so, along with other things that were to happen at a later date, Jesus gave to John a revelation of this sign and identified it as marking the beginning of his presence and of his kingdom and power. (Rev. 12:1, 2, 5, 10) All the evidences point to 1914 as the date.

<sup>22</sup> Since Christ has already taken up his kingdom authority with the beginning of his presence in 1914, and since his presence begins a time of judgment, it follows that

20. How does modern-day Christendom follow the pattern of Israel?

21, 22. To what sign did Jesus point as evidence of his second presence, and what does its appearance indicate as to his revelation?

his revelation in symbolic fire for execution of judgment at the battle of Armageddon must follow very shortly. (Matt. 24:34) All persons of right heart toward God and his sent-forth One will eagerly

lay aside all other interests as of secondary importance and, having their minds braced up with accurate knowledge, will plunge wholeheartedly into the only activity that can bring deliverance.

## Maintaining the Way of Favor

**N**O MAN can look upon God and live. That is because God is spirit and far above man's natural ability to see. After Jesus' death as a human he was raised to immortality as a spirit in the express image of God, so that now it is impossible for man to see the glorified Christ Jesus either. Yet he promised to return and reveal himself to the world of mankind. This he will do not by appearing in the flesh, since he would thereby be unable to accomplish the purpose of his visit, but he will make his presence known to mankind first by the many evidences that were foretold to mark his return. However, not all persons will accept these evidences as a sign that Christ has taken up his invisible position as regards the earth or that he has actually been sent forth in Kingdom power to begin his reign. But as his first presence was to prove his right to the Kingdom, so the purpose of his return is to establish that kingdom in full power and glory and make all persons, nations, and even Satan himself, subject to that righteous rule. Therefore, those who refuse to accept this royal representative of Jehovah's sovereignty by recognizing his dominion through the sign that has been divinely foretold and manifested must be forced to recognize his presence through

the revelation of the fiery execution of judgment against them.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah does not delight in the execution of the wicked. (Ezek. 18:23) That is why when Christ returned in 1914 he did not reveal himself "in a flaming fire" to bring due punishment upon those not knowing God. After the war in heaven had accomplished a successful purpose and Satan with all his demons had been ousted and cast down to the earth, Christ Jesus halted this first exercise of Kingdom power. (Rev. 12:7-9) In giving the sign of his return and of the end of Satan's system of things Jesus said: "Unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones those days will be cut short." (Matt. 24:22, NW) So he temporarily brought an end to the hot war against Satan in order that he might accomplish another purpose of God. (Rev. 7:1-3) It is a time of judgment, a time of showing favor to those whom God approves.

### TIME OF DECISION

<sup>3</sup> After Jesus had cited the examples of Noah and Lot to show the nature of his presence and revelation he then gave evidence to show that his manifestation must precede the execution of adverse judgment. He said: "Then two men will be in the

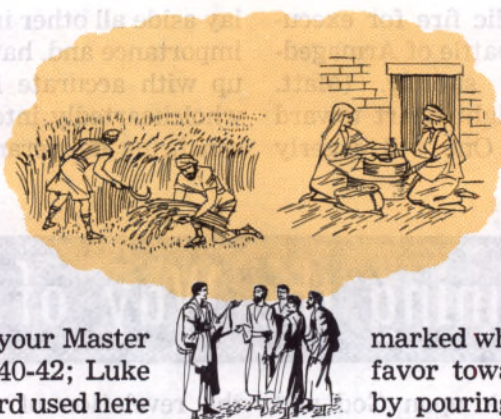
1. (a) What is the purpose of Christ's return as contrasted with that of his first presence? (b) How will he make his presence known?

2. Why was the beginning of Jesus' presence in 1914 not marked by a "revelation"?

3. (a) What illustration did Jesus give to show his manifestation must precede his revelation? (b) What is indicated in some being "taken along"?

field: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned; two women will be grinding at the hand-mill: one will be taken along and the other be abandoned. Keep on the watch, therefore, because you do not know on what day your Master is coming." (Matt. 24:40-42; Luke 17:34, 35, NW) The word used here in the Greek for the expression "taken along" is also used when Joseph is said to have taken his wife home. It is also as when Jesus is said to have taken Peter, James and John along with him into the mount of transfiguration. Jesus used the word when he said: "I am coming again and will *receive* you home to myself, that where I am you also may be." (John 14:3; Matt. 1:20, 24; 17:1, NW) Thus, those "taken along" receive a favorable standing with the Lord and are brought into a way of salvation. This corresponds to Noah's being taken into the ark the day of the flood and to Lot's being taken by the hand and led out of the city and therefore precedes the execution of judgment.

<sup>4</sup> This condition is further illustrated by the judgment of favor which Jesus rendered during the days of his first presence. Throughout his three and a half years of preaching Jesus not only healed the sick physically but also opened the way for spiritual recovery. So when Jesus unexpectedly rode into Jerusalem on Nisan 10, A.D. 33, to present himself as king, a division among the people took place. The multitudes who had prepared themselves by listening to him hailed him as king. On the other hand, the chief priests, who had refused his works, now manifested their



attitude by refusing to recognize and anoint him with holy oil in the manner of accepting kings in Israel. At Pentecost, shortly after Jesus' death and resurrection, this division became even more

marked when Christ manifested his favor toward those following him by pouring out God's active force upon them. It was at this time that they were entrusted with the stewardship of God's service and anointed with his spirit to preach the good news of the resurrection of Jesus, the sign of the first presence of the promised Messiah. Speaking of them as "stewards of sacred secrets of God," Paul discusses this division with the words: "Do not judge anything before the due time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring the secret things of darkness to light and make the counsels of the hearts manifest, and then each one will have his praise come to him from God." (1 Cor. 4:1-5, NW) While Paul was looking forward to Christ's coming for judgment at the spiritual temple in 1918, he had as an example that sudden appearance of Christ at Jehovah's literal temple in Jerusalem Nisan 10, A.D. 33.

<sup>5</sup> In that judgment on Israel Jesus made manifest the heart condition of those religious leaders occupying positions of temple service and rejected them completely, abandoning them to their own hardness of heart. This is shown in the words of Jesus to the fleshly nation of Israel when he pronounced against them Jehovah's official divorce decree. "Look! your house is abandoned to you." It would seem Jesus here meant the temple at Jerusalem, for he

4. (a) When and how did the manifestation of Christ's first presence take place? (b) Into what position of favor were those approved taken?

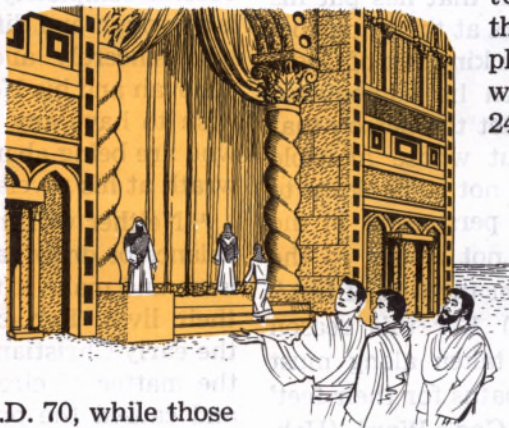
5. In what way were the religious leaders "abandoned"?

later told his disciples concerning the temple: "By no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down." (Matt. 23:38; 24:2, NW) Jehovah from then on withdrew his presence from the house of Israel's worship just as he has abandoned the house of Christendom's worship.

<sup>6</sup> Some religious interpreters of the Bible have concluded from Jesus' words regarding those taken along and those abandoned that when he returns he will suddenly catch up out of the earth in a "rapture" some whom he has approved while others will be left behind and destroyed by fire. This is private interpretation and a wresting of the Scriptures. According to the miniature fulfillment of Jesus' words to his disciples they were separated from the rest of Israel only in their favorable standing and relation with Jehovah. On the other hand, the religious leaders and those who would follow them were left desolated of God's favor and allowed to remain for almost forty years to hear the resurrection of Christ preached throughout the nation. So Israel's time of decision continued until A.D. 70, while those who had been "taken along" continued present with those who had been "abandoned." This miniature foreshadow finds a parallel in the time of Christ's second manifestation and revelation.

<sup>7</sup> In 1918 the Lord suddenly appeared at the spiritual temple for judgment. At that time he showed favor to the faithful over-

comers who were in the sleep of death by raising them to immortality. Those found faithful on the earth were taken along by the Lord into temple service and entrusted with the interests of God's kingdom. (Luke 12:42-44; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17) Since then, especially from 1919 on, they have joyfully gone forth heralding the presence of the King and proclaiming throughout all the inhabited earth the good news of his established kingdom, pointing to the sign of Christ's second presence, the sign of the Son of man. At the same time those who were found to be sluggardly slaves, unmindful of the advance of the sign of Christ's presence, were abandoned to their own evil imaginings and cast out with the class of lawless religious leaders, those called "hypocrites" who have never been faithful to their implied covenant to do temple service. There they await the accomplished end when Christ will be revealed.—Matt. 24:48-51; Luke 12:45, 46.



#### KEEPING IN BALANCE

<sup>8</sup> Christ not only in 1919 manifested favor to those who were earnestly seeking him but also since then has continued to make himself known to those

who recognize his presence through the preaching of these. This increasing activity on the part of those taken along has been carried on despite severe persecution by those who have been abandoned for destruction. The faithful ones take courage, however, in the knowledge that their very preaching is a part of the sign and their boldness an evidence of the impending de-

6. How can it be certain that those taken along are not literally caught up out of the earth?

7. How was favor shown in the manifestation of Christ's second presence, and what resulted to those found unfaithful?

8. Through what activity has Christ continued to manifest himself?

struction of those who oppose. (Phil. 1:27, 28) But they realize there are still many pitfalls that lie between them and the time of the revelation of Jesus Christ. They know that during the consummation of this system of things Jehovah's faithful witnesses are called upon to make decisions every day that might affect their standing with the Lord. They remember that the bulk of the Christian Greek Scriptures admonishing Christians to faithfulness was written when there was special need for them then during the consummation of the Jewish system of things and before the climax of judgment. So today, with their minds braced up for activity those taken along continue to heed the warning of Peter to "keep completely balanced."

<sup>9</sup> The saying, "Once saved always saved," is not in harmony with Bible teaching. Jesus warned: "No man that has put his hand to a plow and looks at the things behind is well fitted for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62, NW) Then he admonished further: "On that day let the person that is on the housetop but whose movable things are in the house not come down to pick these up, and the person out in the field, let him likewise not return to the things behind. Remember the wife of Lot." (Luke 17:31, 32, NW) For this reason those who have been taken along must 'keep making straight paths for their feet' and be guided solely by God's Word. (Heb. 12:13; Prov. 3:5, 6) The beginning of compromise is the beginning of apostasy; so they must and do refuse to be turned aside by any plausible-sounding reasonings of men. (Col. 2:8) Jesus said: "Look out that nobody misleads you; for many will come on the basis of my name, saying: 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many." (Matt. 24:4, 5, NW) Those in the favored position

today carefully and prayerfully continue to study God's Word as it is revealed through the "faithful and discreet slave," recognizing that they individually are but a part of the organization with which Jehovah is dealing and which he is triumphantly directing to victory according to his own will.

<sup>10</sup> Keeping balanced means keeping a clear vision of the theocracy and one's relation to it. An unbalanced person is erratic, changeable, unreliable. Falling a prey to the insidious unrighteousness of the world, one might begin to form his decisions and to set his course of action according to the "accepted" standards of the old-world society. Such a course is dangerous and leads to many painful experiences. (1 Tim. 6:10) One should always remember that many an experienced traveler has become completely lost while on a particularly rough and difficult detour. And those who sincerely and whole-heartedly love Jehovah and his New World society do not wish to have any serious part with those who are being abandoned to Jesus Christ's wrath at his revelation.

<sup>11</sup> Neither will those maintaining proper balance be drawn aside by some secondary issue and make it the motivating factor in their lives. For example, in the days of the early Christians many wished to make the matter of circumcision a major issue and caused the preaching work to be interrupted. The question was not settled nor the trouble abated until the governing body took the necessary action. (Acts 15:1-29) Today, in many countries of the world the racial question becomes a major problem in the Kingdom work. But those of the "faithful and discreet slave" class recognize that the final settling of such

9. What Scriptural admonition is given to those who are in the way of favor?

10. What warning will those take who are properly balanced?

11. (a) How does making secondary issues the important thing upset one's balance? (b) How is this illustrated in the racial issue?

problems is not their commission. Their commission as clearly stated is to preach and to call attention to the existing sign of the approaching revelation of Christ and the execution of his judgment. They refuse to become any part of the wrangling factions and schisms that face extinction at Armageddon. They know that division or class distinction does not exist within Jehovah's service organization even though it may be necessary or expedient to adhere to Caesar's law in some localities by holding separate meetings. However, we know that assembling together is primarily for study, while our main objective is giving the witness in the field. So those whose eye is sincere will rightly maintain complete balance by taking whatever course or following whatever legal methods are most practical to break down prejudice of the people in their territory. Why not show those among whom we live the only way to real freedom, which we are already enjoying? Why force an issue already strained and add to the problems of witnessing? Love for our neighbor is one of Jehovah's righteous requirements. Those who are maintaining complete balance will make sure their love is expressed not toward oneself nor in elevating some particular group in the eyes of man but in properly directing the "other sheep" to the love of God where true help and succor are to be found.

<sup>12</sup> Only the unmerciful look to Armageddon solely as the time of God's wrath and execution of his judgment against the wicked. Paul says: "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are, if you judge; for in the thing in which you judge another, you condemn yourself, inasmuch as you that judge practice the same things. Now we know that the judgment of God is, in accord with truth, against those who

practice such things. But do you have this idea, O man, while you judge those who practice such things and yet you do them, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and longsuffering, because you do not know that the kindly quality of God is trying to lead you to repentance? But according to your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and of the revealing of God's righteous judgment." (Rom. 2:1-5, NW) Those today who are prone to criticize and find fault endanger their position with the Lord and test his mercy and long-suffering perhaps to the limit. That is why Peter admonished us: "Set your hope upon the undeserved kindness that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:13, NW) Since Jehovah has mercifully shortened this day of wrath expressed against Satan by allowing a time when men can flee to safety, those who have the love of God and of their neighbor make all haste to take advantage of it to the full, stabilizing their own minds securely in the accurate knowledge of God's Word and actively proclaiming the good news to all others who will hear.

#### AWAITING THE DAY

<sup>13</sup> In his second letter Peter explains the matter further and again emphasizes the importance of keeping busy. Reminding us that many ridiculers would come who assume God has forgotten man's condition, he says: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance. Yet Jehovah's day will come as a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a hissing

12. In what proper light should the revelation of Jesus Christ be viewed?

13. How does Peter emphasize the importance of keeping busy?

noise, but the elements being intensely hot will be dissolved, and earth and the works in it will be discovered. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in holy acts of conduct and deeds of godly devotion, awaiting and keeping close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah!"—2 Pet. 3:9-12, NW.

<sup>14</sup> Peter's mention of the day's coming as a thief gives rise to another question. Some, untrained in the Scriptures, point to this as an instance of inconsistency in the Bible. "How," they say, "can you harmonize the statements that he would come in power and great glory and also as a thief in the night?" The answer, of course, is simple, as already explained in our discussion. These ridiculers have failed to recognize the various aspects of Christ's presence and what is to be accomplished by each phase of his advent. Whereas the beginning of his presence was heralded world-wide when he came in power and glory, the next phase of his presence, namely his appearance or manifestation at the temple for judgment, was as unexpected as a thief in the night. Even those seeking him were not aware of this activity until after it had begun.—Mal. 3:1, 2; Matt. 25:1-13.

<sup>15</sup> The day of Jehovah referred to above by Peter is the day for the expression of God's wrath at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Here again the time is spoken of as thieflike. How, then, will even the wicked know he is present? It is the beginning of that "day" that arrives unexpectedly and comes upon them while they continue unprepared, but as it progresses it will become more and more obvious to all that the end of this system of things has arrived. (Ezek. 7:6-9; Luke 21:34-36) But unlike

at Christ's manifestation in 1918 those who are seeking him now will not be caught napping. This is made certain by Paul's words: "You yourselves know quite well that Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying, 'Peace and security!' then sudden destruction is to be instantly upon them just as the pang of distress upon a pregnant woman, and they will by no means escape. But you, brothers, you are not in darkness, so that that day should overtake you as it would thieves, for you are all sons of light and sons of day." (1 Thess. 5:2-5, NW) Being in the light, they have come to distinguish accurately between the beginning of Christ's presence, his manifestation and his revelation. They are thereby "handling the word of the truth aright."

<sup>16</sup> How shall we know when the time of the revelation of Jesus Christ has arrived and has begun? Notice the sign given to the Thessalonians by Paul in his letter quoted from in the preceding paragraph. When they are saying, "Peace and security!" the time has arrived. And how will this be so? Persecution of those taken along into God's favor is certain to continue and increase at the hands of those left desolate of God's presence. (Rev. 12:17; 13:7) These abandoned ones, at Satan's instigation, will muster all their forces in final all-out war against Jehovah's enthroned King and will seek to wipe out the new nation of spiritual Israel that Christ is building as a part of the new world. It might be they will make it appear they have accomplished their purpose and for this reason cry, "Peace and security!" Then it is that Christ reveals himself to the nations in all the majesty and power

14. In what different ways are the beginnings of Christ's second presence and manifestation marked?  
15. (a) In what way is the revelation of Jesus Christ like a thief? (b) How does it differ in this respect from his manifestation?

16. How will the beginning of the revelation of Jesus Christ be recognized?

of his great invisible presence.—Ezek. 38:18, 19, 21-23.

<sup>17</sup> "This takes into account that it is righteous on God's part to repay tribulation to those who make tribulation for you, but, to you who suffer tribulation, relief along with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings due punishment upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. These very ones will pay the penalty of everlasting destruction from before the Lord and from the glory of his strength." (2 Thess. 1:6-9, NW) The ax falls first at the roots of apostate Christen-

dom (Jer. 25:34, 35; Luke 3:9) and, when these mercenary shepherds flee for cover, only those Christians whose faith has been tried in the fire will survive and continue to pronounce the coming judgment against heathendom and all the rest of Satan's organization.

<sup>18</sup> Courage, then, faithful slaves of Jehovah! "Let us not sleep on as the rest do, but let us stay awake and keep our senses." (1 Thess. 5:6, NW) The way of maintaining the favored position is clearly marked out before us and the victory feast is certain. So press on in the advancing light of the manifestation of Christ's presence until he is fully revealed and final and complete deliverance has been accomplished!

17, 18. Where does the execution of judgment begin, and who alone will find deliverance?

## Brazil's Religious Crisis

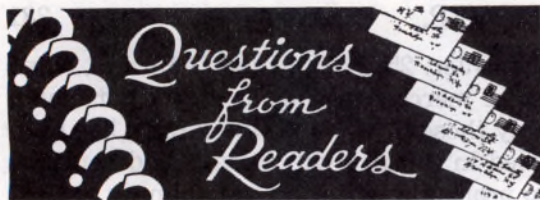
☞ When Brazil's government proposed a law to sanction divorce, Cardinal Carmelo of São Paulo declared that the Roman Catholic Church would fight the government on the issue. This prompted one priest, "Father" Calazans, to admit that virtually all the Catholics in Brazil were Catholics in name only. For he said that what is needed besides political action on divorce is "real Catholics" who practice their religion—but these are an insignificantly small number. The vast majority of Brazil's Catholics, declared priest Calazans, merely have "diplomatic relations" with the church on "social occasions," such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

☞ So is Brazil experiencing a "religious crisis"? This was the question asked by that country's important magazine *Visão* (Vision). In reply, a Catholic bishop stated that there was no "religious crisis," because the Catholic Church is "present in every key position in the country" and even has plans for enlarging its sphere of political influence. In spite of this answer, the editor of *Visão* commented that regardless of outward appearances, the Catholic Church "cannot conceal the sad truth that our people are only nominally and statistically religious." He explained that "Brazilians are much more interested in entertainment and in automobiles and refrigerators than in religion."

## Who Converted?

☞ Franciscan priest Berard Haile, who has spent 53 years working with the Navaho Indians in the southwestern United States, has, according to *Time*, March 15, learned bit by bit from their medicine men "what no white man had known before him: the whole of the 'Blessing Way'—a sacred, secret collection of ceremonies covering the whole religious life of the Navaho people." He has written this carefully searched-out information in a 1,203-page manuscript, which he hopes to have published. When the Navahos gave their approval and support, he said: "I am one of you." But one of the tribal councilors put it another way: "You came to make Christians out of the Navahos, but the Navahos have made a Navaho out of you."

We wonder how many other peoples look at their missionaries in the same manner.



● On the time of Elizabeth's conception of John the Baptist, the book "*Make Sure of All Things*" (page 167, column 1, bottom paragraph) says: "1 Chron. 24:10, 18 [Regarding the courses of the priests]: 'The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah.' [Of the 24 courses the second week of the eighth would fall in the latter part of the fourth Jewish month, or early part of July, our calendar.]" How is this calculated?—R. L., Mexico.

John the Baptist's father, a "priest named Zechariah," was "of the division [course] of Abijah," the eighth course. (Luke 1:5, 8, 9, NW) Abijah was a priestly Israelite of King David's time. Then, about 1050 B.C., Israel's priests and the Levites, respectively, were first divided by David into 24 groups.\* At Jerusalem's original sanctuary (tabernacle or tent—1 Chron. 16:1) those 24 divisions first served by turns, separately one week at a time, not two weeks together. After David's son Solomon had built and dedicated the typical temple for Jehovah's name, each of the 24 groups in its turn twice a year served its "course" at the temple. (1 Chron. 24:1-19, 31; 2 Chron. 8:14; 31:2; 35:4; Ezra 3:10) Each week-long term of service of each course ran from sabbath to sabbath. (2 Ki. 11:5-7; 2 Chron. 23:8) Apparently the outgoing course took care of the sabbath morning sacrifice and the incoming course, the evening sacrifice; and thus both outgoing and incoming groups spent the sabbath in the sanctuary. Priests of other courses could enter the temple and perform priestly acts, so long as they did not interfere with the functions of priests officiating in their allotted course. "Each 'course' of priests and of Levites . . . came on duty for a week, from one Sabbath to another."—Edersheim, *The Temple*, pp. 66, 158.

As of 537 B.C., upon the ending of the faith-

\* "Originally, when the tabernacle was at Shiloh, there were altogether sixteen courses, equally divided between the descendants of Eleazar and Ithamar. Now that there were more chief men of Eleazar, David divided each of their eight courses into two, producing a total of sixteen, while the eight courses of Ithamar remained unchanged."—*Soncino Books of the Bible* (1952, London, The Soncino Press), Vol. "Chronicles," p. 130.

ful Jewish remnant's 70-year exile in Babylon, Abijah's course is one of the more than twenty courses of priests named as having returned to Jerusalem with Governor Zerubbabel or later.—Ezra 2:36-39; Neh. 10:7, 8; 12:1-4.

Writing of King David's division of the priests into 24 courses, Josephus adds: "And this partition has remained to this day."—*Antiquities of the Jews* (writing finished about A.D. 93), Book 7, chap. 14, ¶7; see also McClintock and Strong *Cyclopædia*, Vol. 8, pp. 576, 577; *Imperial Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 2, p. 664, col. 2.

Now since each of the 24 courses served two turns a year (about six months apart), this adds up to 48 weeks' service. However, the Jewish (lunar) year was about ten days shorter than our calendar (solar) year and so consisted of about 51 weeks. To fill out the year one adjustment, reasonably, was necessary every two or three years when an intercalary 13th month was added in the Jewish (lunar) calendar to harmonize it with solar time. Also other adjustments evidently occurred each year through having all the courses serve jointly during the three main annual festivals. (2 Chron. 5:11; *The Mishnah*, "Sukkah," Sec. 5, ¶¶ 7, 8) Thrice yearly all Israel's males, including priests and Levites, appeared before Jehovah, by his command, at the temple. The vast amount of work connected with the thousands\* of animal sacrifices and related tasks required the co-operation of all the priests for a full week and more on each of those three principal festal occasions:

(1) Passover, in the divinely ordained first month Abib,† was immediately followed by the week-long feast of unleavened bread.—Ex. 34:18, NW.

(2) Pentecost, 50 days later, was another of such festal events, linked with the "festival of weeks."—Ex. 34:22, NW.

(3) Yom Kippur ("day of atonement") occurred in the Jehovah-fixed seventh month Ethanim‡ (10th day) and was closely followed by the feast of tabernacles, the 15th to the 21st, with a special sabbath, "the great day of the

\* Josephus records that, at one Jewish Passover feast in the days of Roman emperor Nero, they found "the number of sacrifices was two hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred; which, upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to two millions seven hundred thousand and two hundred persons that were pure and holy."—*Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, chap. 9, ¶3.

† Called Nisan after 537 B.C., when the 70-year Babylonian exile ended.—Ex. 12:2; 13:4, NW, footnote<sup>b</sup>.

‡ Called Tizri, or Tishri, after 537 B.C. Compare Genesis 8:13, NW, footnote<sup>b</sup> with Genesis 7:11, NW, footnote<sup>a</sup>.

feast," on the 22nd.—John 7:37; Ex. 34:22-24; Lev. 16:29-31; 25:9, 10, NW.

Aside from those three main festal periods, during which priests of all courses served jointly, priests in each of the 24 courses would serve at all other times of the year exclusively by turn.

At what time of year did the courses begin to count, or when did the first course start? Seemingly it was immediately after, or on the final (eighth) or "great day of the feast" of tabernacles ("festival of booths," NW), which celebration closed the festive year. Jehovah commanded: "At the end of every seven years, in the appointed time of the year of the release, in the festival of booths, . . . you will read this law." (Deut. 31:10, 11, NW) Incidentally, the festival of booths is the last of the three great feasts to find fulfillment in antitype; and "this feast closed the original festive calendar; . . . What the seventh day, or Sabbath, was in reference to the week, the seventh month seems to have been in reference to the year. It closed not only the sacred cycle, but also the agricultural or working year. It also marked the change of seasons, the approach of rain and of the winter equinox [properly, winter *solstice*, or *autumnal* equinox], and determined alike the commencement and the close of a sabbatical year." (Edersheim, *The Temple*, pp. 234, 235; also see pp. 179, 265.) Significant, too, may be the fact that the dedication of the David-planned and Solomon-built temple was in the seventh month, priestly work officially beginning then at this uniquely magnificent edifice. (2 Chron. 7:10) Also at this time of the year, in 537 B.C., the Israelites who, as the typical faithful remnant, had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, again began orderly services at the site of that demolished magnificent temple.—Ezra 3:6.

Let us admit, for the purpose of this calculation, that the priestly courses began to count in the Jehovah-set seventh month (which, in our present calendar, began in late September or early October). If so, then the first round of 24 courses plus the eight courses of the annual second round (plus the mentioned joint-service period of two of the three festivals) would extend, generally, into the next Jewish year's third month, perhaps possibly into its fourth month. This meant that the eighth course's second round fell (on our calendar) in late June or early July.

Reasonably, then, Zechariah listened to the

"good news" Jehovah's angel Gabriel told him when that minister from heaven interrupted Zechariah's altar service in the *second* round of the eighth course. Upon completing his priestly duties in that allotted course, Zechariah returned home to his wife Elizabeth and then their son John was conceived. (Luke 1:5, 19, 23, 24, NW) This would have been at least in late June or early July of the year 3 B.C. About six months later (namely, in our December) Jesus was conceived. Nine months after that Jesus' birth as a perfect child would occur about October 1 in the year 2 B.C.\*—Luke 1:26, 36; 2:6, 7.

Why do we say the "second round" of the eighth (or, Zechariah's) course? Because the first round of the eighth course would come in late November or early December. This would inconsistently bring Jesus' birth (occurring about fifteen months later) in March. In that case Jesus' baptism at the age of thirty would also have been in March. (Luke 3:23) Neither would this spring-season date harmonize with Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27), which shows that the Messiah or Christ was to arrive at the end of 69 weeks of years, these weeks beginning in the fall of 455 B.C. and ending in the fall of A.D. 29. (It also contradicts this same prophecy that foretold that the resurrected Jesus would appear in heaven to pay over to Jehovah the merit of the sacrifice Jesus offered "in the *midst* of the week," Daniel's prophetic 70th week of years, hence in the spring.)

However, since it was actually in the spring of A.D. 33 that Jesus Christ ascended and appeared in heaven, then three and a half years (or, half of a seven-year week) would take us back to the beginning of the week in the *autumn* of A.D. 29, not the spring, for Messiah's baptism.

So, then, the available evidence reasonably seems to favor the following calculation: Counting the commencement of the 24-course priestly service as beginning at the end of the festival of booths, Zechariah was in the *second* round of the eighth course, and his son John the Baptist was conceived by Elizabeth in late June or early July, about six months before Mary's conception of Jesus.—Luke 1:26, 36.

Thus, from the foregoing, it is seen that the book "*Make Sure of All Things*" gives the *approximate* time for John's conception, and that it is ascertained, in part, by calculating back from the time of Jesus' birth about October 1.

\* Compare "*New Heavens and a New Earth*", p. 368.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

faithful and true witness. (Rev. 3:14) Jehovah's witnesses delight to walk in Jehovah's name, rejoicing at all times to tell others about his glorious kingdom.

## BROOKLYN BETHEL VACATION

The Society's offices, factory and Bethel home in Brooklyn, New York, will be closed from July 31 to August 15, inclusive. Orders and correspondence sent in during that period will not be handled until some time after the re-opening of the offices. Please anticipate your needs well in advance and place your orders in time for attention before the vacation period.

## "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES

Week of July 11: The Revelation of Jesus Christ.  
Week of July 18: Maintaining the Way of Favor.

## ✓✓ CHECK YOUR MEMORY ✓✓

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

- ✓ Why the Christian's purpose does not include changing the world? P. 355, ¶4.
- ✓ What the Scriptures say about profanity and vulgar speech? P. 360, ¶3.
- ✓ Who, among the ancient pagans, worshiped their ancestors? P. 361, ¶4.
- ✓ Why ancestor worship is foolish? P. 362, ¶5.
- ✓ At what Christian assembly with just 645 in attendance 115 were baptized? P. 364, ¶3.
- ✓ Where there has been a growth from 354 ministers to 6,429 in just nine years? P. 365, ¶3.

- ✓ Upon acceptance of what does one's judgment really depend? P. 369, ¶3.
- ✓ Why the Jewish leaders could not recognize Messiah's first presence? P. 372, ¶14.
- ✓ How, just as the Jews did, modern Christendom is rejecting Christ? P. 374, ¶20.
- ✓ What proves that the statement "Once saved always saved" is false? P. 378, ¶9.
- ✓ How apparently conflicting predictions of Christ's presence are harmonized? P. 380, ¶14.
- ✓ When John the Baptist was conceived? Jesus conceived? Jesus born? P. 383, ¶4.