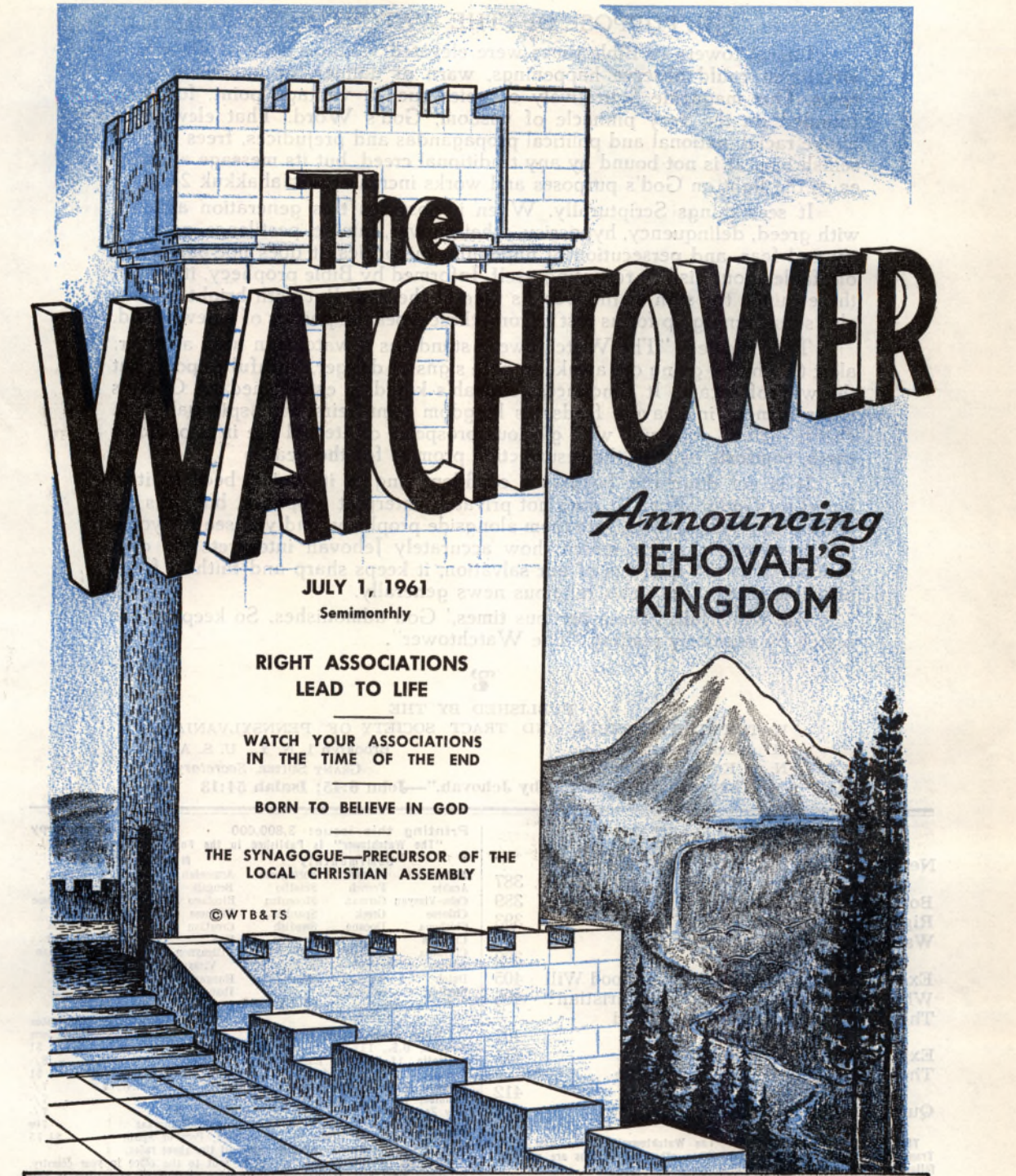




The WATCHTOWER

JULY 1, 1961

Semimonthly

**RIGHT ASSOCIATIONS
LEAD TO LIFE**

**WATCH YOUR ASSOCIATIONS
IN THE TIME OF THE END**

BORN TO BELIEVE IN GOD

**THE SYNAGOGUE—PRECURSOR OF THE
LOCAL CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY**

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Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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



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

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NEIGHBOR LOVE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR

Love of God

KEEPING one law does not excuse one from obeying other laws. For example: If you drive an automobile you know that you must not only keep to the right side of the road (or the left, depending upon the country in which you live), but you must also observe the speed limits and heed the traffic lights. You would not think of excusing your speeding simply because you kept on your side of the road, nor would you think of justifying your being on the wrong side of the road simply because you were not speeding and observed the traffic lights. Right?

But this underlying principle is not always appreciated when it comes to spiritual things, to religion, to the worship of God. A case in point involves the two great commandments of life that Jesus Christ laid down for his followers: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength," and, "You must love your neighbor as yourself." The human tendency is to stress one of these and, because of

this, to excuse the neglect of the other commandment, perhaps unconsciously. —Mark 12:29-31.

Thus it is a common failing in Christendom to be concerned only about showing neighbor love, letting the more important commandment, to love God with one's whole heart, mind, soul and strength, be entirely lost sight of. So we find many well-meaning professed Christians busying themselves with the "social gospel," with humanitarian projects, such as fighting diseases, political corruption, economic and social evils, but they give little if any thought to the first and greater commandment, to whether this truly is God's will for them or not. Consciously or unconsciously they justify their lack of love of God because of their demonstrating what they consider to be neighbor love.

Typical of this kind of thinking is the popular poem so often quoted with approval about one Abou ben Adhem. One night he awoke to see an angel writing in a book of gold the names of those who loved the Lord. When he asked the angel if his name was among these and was told it was not, he said: "I pray thee, then, write me as one who loves his fellow men." The poem goes on to say: "The angel wrote and vanished. The next night it came again with a great wakening light, and showed the names whom love of God had blest, and lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest." In other words, love of neighbor is superi-

or to love of God. But not so. Love of God comes first. Not that love of neighbor may be neglected either, for, as the apostle John well makes the point, "He who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen." —1 John 4:20.

True, those manifesting neighbor love may insist that they love God and this is the way they show it. But that is merely their own construction of matters. God's Word tells us that "this is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments." So unless we obey God's requirements for us we may not claim to be loving him. Adam might have partaken of the forbidden fruit because of his fondness for Eve, but that did not justify or excuse his disobedient act. Then there was King Saul; he, in effect, used this very argument. When confronted with his failure to obey God's command he excused it on the basis of his regard for what the people of Israel wanted. But that did not serve as any justification in the eyes of God. For his disobedience King Saul was rejected by Jehovah God.—1 John 5:3; 1 Sam. 15:22, 23.

There was also King Solomon. He had so much "neighbor love" for his wives that he made provision to support their idolatrous forms of worship, in the end no longer loving Jehovah, the God of his father David, with all his heart, mind, soul and strength. Did his "neighbor love" excuse his lack of love for Jehovah God? Not at all! As a result King Solomon, in spite of all his wisdom, in spite of his being used to build the temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem and to write nearly all the Bible book of Proverbs as well as the book of Ecclesiastes and The Song of Solomon, died out of favor with God.—1 Ki. 11:1-9.

Jesus Christ, however, did not make this mistake. He recognized that his prime obligation was toward his heavenly Father, to do his will, to bear witness to His

name and kingdom. Thus when on one occasion, no doubt because he had fed the multitude with loaves and fishes, "they were about to come and seize him to make him king," Jesus "withdrew again into the mountain all alone." Love of neighbor could have acceded to the popular demand, but not his love of God, for he knew that such was not God's will, 'his kingdom being no part of that world.' Nevertheless, by putting God first, Jesus followed the course that eventually will result in the greatest good to humankind, to his neighbors while he was on earth, in that it will mean their being restored to Paradise in God's new world.—John 6:15; 18:36; Luke 23:43.

Viewed thus, it is clear that neighbor love of itself, without taking God's purpose into consideration, is most shortsighted indeed. What does love of God require? Merely going to some church occasionally? Having one's name on some church roll and paying one's dues? Hardly. And especially not if what one hears are sermons that have no bearing whatever on what the Bible says about God and his requirements. To love God we must become acquainted with him, for how can we truly love one about whom we know little or nothing? Knowledge about himself he has caused to be recorded in his two great books, the Book of nature and the Book of books, the Bible, particularly the latter. And since the Bible shows that we need help to understand it and God has provided such help, to love God we must take advantage of that help. Reading the Bible without understanding it will not help us to love God.—Acts 8:30, 31.

That Book also tells us what God's requirements for us are, regarding conduct, associations and our mission in life. Heeding its counsel, we will be able to balance our love of God with our neighbor love in an intelligent way.

BORN TO BELIEVE IN

Why do some people believe and others not? Do scientists believe that God is? Why do you believe in God?

GOD

MEN were born to think about God. They were created to worship and serve their Creator exclusively. This fact the Bible makes clear. (Ex. 20:2-5) Therefore, no matter how hard some men try to dismiss God from their minds, God has a way of coming to the fore in their thoughts.

For example, hardened materialists, such as Russia's Nikita Khrushchev and others, quite regularly bring up the subject of God even though they say they do not believe. When the Soviet rockets and earth satellites penetrated outer space, Y. T. Fadeyev, head of the Russian scientific-atheistic section of the journal *Science and Life*, in a speech said: "The fact that satellites and rockets have not detected the All-Highest, angels and so on, bears testimony against religious convictions and strengthens disbelief in God."

One is almost forced to laugh at the childishness of such arguments, because what adult would expect rockets or satellites to search out supernatural angelic creatures or detect evidences of the Almighty Spirit? As Jesus Christ said: "God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." Yet from this report it is evident that these materialists do think about God, whether they believe in him or not.—John 4:24.

According to a survey by George Gallup, "no less than 96 percent of U.S. citizens polled believe in God." In Great Britain the percentage appears considerably less. Out of a number of Britons who regarded themselves as upstanding Christians, 78

percent said they believed in God even though they were not active in religion in any discernible way. Atheism, however, is not on the increase in England; only 6 percent of the population so identify themselves.

Belief in God, as the expression is generally used in the world, does not necessarily mean ability to explain his existence or purpose. It merely stands for a conviction that there is a Creator. All too frequently, especially in Christendom, there is a strong conception of God created in the image of man rather than the way the Bible puts it, 'man created in the image of God.' Perhaps equally distressing is that "believers" in God often have no idea whatsoever of who he is. Presbyterian minister Frank Lawson stated: Grandfather believed unreservedly. "His son believes also, but he isn't just exactly sure what he believes or why. Asked if he believes in God, he'll answer, 'Yes'; asked why, he won't know."

Why, after approximately 2,000 years of Christianity and about 1,500 years of Jewry, is not God real to Americans and Britons, who are among the most church-going people in the world? Lawson pointed the finger of blame directly at the churches. He said the churches have minimized God and have hidden Bible truths from the people. *Life* magazine, March 30, 1959, says that this state of unbelief exists "partly because of the blight of secularism in the churches, which have become just another valued branch of American democratic culture instead of its center. What used to be the minister's study is now his office, and as a busy agent of his social gospel he is less a spokesman of God than a useful citizen, making East Overshoe 'a better place to live.'"

Physiologist and biochemist Walter Os-

car Lundberg gives us another reason why there is so much skepticism today about God's existence. He says: "A denial of the existence of God is sometimes an arbitrarily established policy of influential social groups or organizations, or of the state. Fear of social consequences, or even physical consequences where atheism is a state creed, discourages any active espousal by the individual of the revelation of God found in Nature." Others parrot the propaganda line that any who hold fast to the Bible account of creation are old-fashioned and unscientific, that believers in God are among the uneducated, uninformed, simple folk of the earth who do not know any better.

To dispel any such idea for all time and to build faith in the Almighty and give reasons for his existence, herein are submitted the statements and arguments of world-famous men telling why they believe there is a God.

WHY SOME MEN BELIEVE IN GOD

Scientist-inventor Thomas Edison, when asked his view about whether there is a God, replied: "After years of watching the processes of nature, I cannot doubt the existence of a Supreme Intelligence. The existence of such a God can, to my mind, almost be proved from chemistry."

Theologian Thomas Aquinas gave reason for belief in the existence of God with a premise common both to the theist and to the atheist, the fact that "some things are in motion." 'Motion implies an unmoved Mover; similarly, there must be an uncaused First Cause that possesses in itself the reason for its existence; the existence of creatures whose nonexistence is possible implies the existence of a necessary Creator; the scale of perfections evident in the universe implies the existence of an absolute standard, a perfect Being.'

Scientist Sir Isaac Newton had this to say about nature and God: "Whence is it that nature does nothing in vain; and whence arises all that order and beauty which we see in the world? . . . How came the bodies of animals to be contrived with so much art and for what ends were their several parts? Was the eye contrived without skill in optics, or the ear without knowledge of sounds? . . . And these things being rightly despatched, does it not appear from phenomena that there is a being incorporeal, living, intelligent?"

Mathematician and chemist John Cleveland Cothran says: "Lord Kelvin, one of the world's greatest physicists, has made the following significant statement: 'If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to believe in God.' I must declare myself in full agreement with this statement." Cothran further states: "The material realm not being able to create itself and its governing laws, the act of creation must have been performed by some nonmaterial agent. . . . Hence our logical and inescapable conclusion is not only that creation occurred but that it was brought about according to the plan and will of a Person endowed with supreme intelligence and knowledge (omniscience), and the power to bring it about and keep it running according to plan (omnipotence). That is to say, we accept unhesitatingly the fact of the existence of 'the supreme spiritual Being, God, the Creator and Director of the universe,' mentioned in the beginning. . . . The advances that have occurred in science since Lord Kelvin's day would enable him to state more emphatically than ever: 'If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by science to believe in God.'"

The existence of radioactive elements establishes a beginning to earth's creation. The fact that such radioactive elements, which disintegrate over a period of time,

are still in existence is incontrovertible evidence that the earth has not always existed, that it did have a beginning. And since no material thing can create itself, and since not even the wisest scientist will argue that the universe created itself out of nothing, all of this points to but one thing—God.

Zoologist Edward Luther Kessel reveals some interesting facts about a law of thermodynamics, the law of entropy as it is often called. Kessel says: "The law of entropy states that there is a continuous flow of heat from warmer to colder bodies, and that this flow cannot be reversed to pass spontaneously in the opposite direction. Entropy is the ratio of unavailable to available energy, so that it may be said that the entropy of the universe is always increasing. Therefore the universe is headed for a time when the temperature will be universally uniform and there will be no more useful energy. Consequently there will be no more chemical and physical processes, and life itself will cease to exist. But because life is still going on, and chemical and physical processes are still in progress, it is evident that our universe could not have existed from eternity, else it would have long since run out of useful energy and ground to a halt. Therefore, quite unintentionally, science proves that our universe had a beginning. And in so doing it proves the reality of God, for whatever had a beginning did not begin of itself but demands a Prime Mover, a Creator, a God."

The argument about life on earth and the age of man is not ended. Jim Bishop of the Washington *Evening Star* reported this interesting bit: "A short time ago, Dr. John Rosholt of Miami University, working with Dr. Cesare Emiliani, worked out an age prospectus based on minuscule amounts of uranium which have settled to the bottom of the seas as proactinium 231 and

thorium 230. Uranium requires thousands of years to decay, and, by testing amounts found in sediment on the ocean floor, the so-called warm period of the earth can be determined. Their tests show that, if man came from the sea as a two-legged fish, or as an ape, it took place 95,000 years ago. The time is too short for the fish (or ape) to have evolved into a two-legged man with—most important—a will of his own and the ability to impart knowledge to his young. In the universe, 95,000 years is nothing." Creation is the only logical explanation for man's presence, which again proves God's existence.

Consider the magnificent universe in which we live. Consider our earth and the great variety and complexity of living organisms on it. Could chance or any known natural laws have built them up from inorganic matter? According to Bryant, Lecomte du Nouy, the first scientist to apply mathematical formulae successfully to the statement of biological laws, shows that "the laws of inorganic evolution contradict those of the evolution of life. He gives mathematical formulae to show that inorganic matter acting in accordance with its laws could not have created even a single molecule of protein—let alone a living organism with powers of reproduction. He maintains that only through the intervention of God could the gap have been bridged between the inorganic and the organic."

THE BIBLE AND GOD

Not only does science give one reason to believe in God, but it causes one to see the need for a revelation from God about himself. The Bible fills that need. Chemist Roger J. Voskuyl says: "As a scientist, it is more reasonable for me to believe in a Creator than in an eternally existing cosmos. . . . One cannot rightly know God from the natural world alone. The scientist may work for an eternity, but he will

never come to know God and all His attributes. . . . Man is but a creature of a Creator; therefore, man cannot learn about God by investigation of His creation alone, but he needs a special revelation. That special revelation is God's Word, which has been given in the Scriptures."

Distinguished scientist Warren Weaver said: "I believe that the Bible is the purest revelation we have of the nature and goodness of God." Physicist and chemist Oscar Leo Brauer writes: "There is Special Divine Revelation. Another name for that is the Bible. Science can establish that a creative act at some time must have taken place, implying the existence of a Divine Intelligence and a Divine Power. Science can also establish that none but a Divine Intelligence could have been the Author of the tremendous, involved and intricate system of laws in the universe. But only the Bible can identify that Divine Intelligence and Power as the God most of us have learned to know about from early childhood—the God who has revealed himself uniquely and supremely in His Son, Jesus Christ."

The Bible does what nature cannot do. Nature only submits circumstantial evidence that God exists, but the Bible calls the Creator by name. "This is what The true God, Jehovah, has said, the Creator of the heavens and the grand One stretching them out; the One laying out the earth and its produce, the One giving breath to the people on it, and spirit to those walking in it. 'I am Jehovah. That is my name; and to anyone else I shall not give my own glory, neither my praise to graven images.'" (Isa. 42:5, 8) The psalmist wrote: "That people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most **High** over all the earth."—Ps. 83:18.

The inspired apostle Paul tells us that Jehovah's "invisible qualities are clearly

seen from the world's creation onward, because they are understood by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." The psalmist exclaims: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God, and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling. One day after another day causes speech to bubble forth, and one night after another night shows forth knowledge." —Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1, 2.

The scales of perfection evident in the creation of the universe imply the existence of an absolute standard and a perfect Being. Regarding Jehovah, the Bible says: "Perfect is his activity." "God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace." Order and design in the universe are proof of that fact. The presence of life bespeaks a life-giver. Jehovah is "the source of life." —Deut. 32:3, 4; 1 Cor. 14:33; Ps. 36:9.

Another fact that stands out in nature is that our God is a Master Creator who loves beauty. The majesty of the sunrise and sunset, the moon and stars, flowers and trees, the gorgeous colors on the scales of a fish and the feathers of a peacock tell us that Jehovah loves beauty. (Ps. 104:24) We know too that Jehovah is a loving God, for among men we find the love of a mother for her child, the love of men and women for each other. We also see that falsehood betrays itself and injustice reaps a grim reward. Can we imagine these qualities stemming from an Author who knows nothing of love, righteousness and judgment? No, we cannot. The Bible tells us that "God is love," that "righteousness and judgment are the established place of his throne."—1 John 4:8; Ps. 97:2.

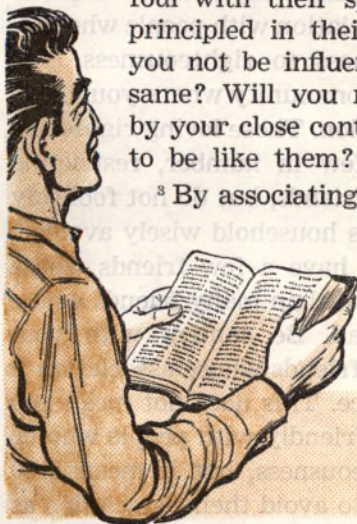
Nothing can be more true than that God is, as both the Bible and nature so eloquently testify. Therefore, in God's own Word unbelievers are appropriately called fools and are justly judged inexcusable. —Ps. 14:1; Rom. 1:20.

RIGHT ASSOCIATIONS

Lead to LIFE

WILL not a piece of soft clay when pressed against a patterned surface carry away with it an impression of that surface? Will not the pattern cause the clay to be molded to present a somewhat similar appearance? People are like clay. Their thinking, speech and actions can be influenced either for good or for bad by their associations. As clay, they become like those with whom they associate.

² If your companions have high moral principles and a love for what is right, their wholesome influence will have a good effect upon you and will be reflected in your daily life. On the other hand, if your companions have minds that are continually in the gutter, will not your thinking be dragged down to their level? If they are foul with their speech and unprincipled in their actions, will you not be influenced to be the same? Will you not be molded by your close contact with them to be like them?



³ By associating with a person who is wise you can absorb some of his wisdom

1-3. (a) Why can people be compared to clay? (b) How can you associate with a wise person, and what are the benefits?



and apply it in your daily life. Such companionship can be beneficial to you and can be the means of avoiding many of life's pitfalls. While it may not be possible for you to associate physically with a wise person, as people in the first century associated with Jesus Christ and listened to his words of wisdom, you can associate with them by means of their writings or writings about them. By reading their written thoughts your mind has association with their minds, and you are able to benefit from their wisdom. "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise." —Prov. 13:20.

⁴ A dependable source of wisdom is God's written Word. There you are able to associate with wise men who were noted for their faith and integrity. There you find expressions of God's thoughts, giving wise counsel and instructions. By regularly reading the Scriptures you have the best association you can find. You are permitting the wisdom of the Creator to mold

4. Where can the best associations be found?

your thinking in a way that is for your own good. This is the kind of association you should seek, as it can lead you in the way to eternal life. "You will cause me to know the path of life."—Ps. 16:11.

⁵ Right associations are not as easily found as wrong associations, because we are living in a world that is not devoted to righteousness. It is a world where the wicked prosper and the thoughts of a large percentage of the people are only bad all the time. This is understandable in view of the one who is the invisible ruler of this world. "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) It is a reflection of his wicked nature. Since you are living in a wicked world, it is vital to be cautious about whom you choose as a close companion.

SEPARATE FROM WORLD

⁶ The popular opinions and customs in a community or nation exercise a powerful thought-shaping influence that tends to mold each person there to be like the majority. In an unrighteous society this influence is not for your good and should be resisted. The closer you associate with such a community the more difficult it will be to combat its power to mold you to be like it. The safe course is to keep separate from it, and this can be done although you live in it. There are many examples in the Scriptures that prove that this is possible.

⁷ Noah's household did not disperse among the wicked people of his day, seeking companionship with those people. They would not have benefited from such association, because the popular thinking and actions of that time were not upbuilding

but degenerating. "Consequently Jehovah saw that the badness of man had become great in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time." (Gen. 6:5) How could persons who loved righteousness find any pleasure from close association with people whose every thought was corrupt? How could they be companions with people whose wicked actions they hated? Noah's household followed the wise course by keeping separate from the world of that time although they lived in its midst. They did not permit popular opinion to pressure them into ungodly activities. They confined their associations to those who loved righteousness and who put obedience to God foremost. In their case this meant a companionship that was restricted to a small group of eight persons. This right association led to their preservation when the wicked system of things in those days was destroyed. It meant life for them.

⁸ Because their group was small, they may have felt restricted in their circle of friends, but how could they broaden that circle by including persons of that world who had nothing in common with them? It would have been dangerous for them to have close association with people who preferred wickedness to righteousness. You may live in a community where you are in a similar situation. Those loving righteousness may be few in number, restricting your circle of friends, but do not foolishly do what Noah's household wisely avoided. It is better to have a few friends whose influence is good than many friends whose influence is bad. Be content with your small circle of friends whose association is a good influence. This does not mean you should not be friendly with people who do not love righteousness, but it means you would be wise to avoid their association as close companions or friends.

5. Why is it easier to find wrong associations than right associations?

6. How does a community exercise an influence that can be for good or for bad, and what is the safe course to take in a bad community?

7, 8. (a) What example do we find in Noah's household, and what problem did their course of action create? (b) Are we to be unfriendly with worldly people?

⁹ Lot was another example showing how it is possible to live in a bad community but at the same time keep separate from it. He succeeded in doing this while living in the infamous city of Sodom. As a lover of righteousness he had nothing in common with those people. How could he seek their companionship when their thoughts, speech and daily lives were distressing to him because of being wicked? Lot "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.

¹⁰ With such disgust for those people, would Lot have sought to be accepted as one of them? Would he have sought to be an active part in their community and activities? On the contrary, he kept separate from them as his forefather Noah kept separate from the law-defying people of his day. The fact that he was separate seems to be indicated by the manner in which the people regarded him at the time two materialized angels visited him. Instead of considering Lot as one of them in their community, they said: "This lone man came here to reside awhile and yet he would actually play the judge. Now we are going to do worse to you than to them." (Gen. 19:9) The fact that Lot survived the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was due to his keeping separate from that wicked community, not permitting its bad influence to corrupt him.

¹¹ Separation from the world was the course that Jesus Christ also followed. Although he circulated among unrighteous people, preaching to them, he did not become part of their world. He did not seek

the companionship of persons who had no love for his Father, and he did not recommend that his followers should. Regarding them he said: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) He wanted them to maintain right associations by keeping separate from the world over which Satan is the invisible ruler.

NATION OF ISRAEL

¹² The nation of Israel formed a unique community that not only had a set of righteous laws but had God as its invisible King. It was a wholesome community consisting of people devoted to the undefiled worship of the Supreme Sovereign of the universe. That nation was set apart from all other peoples as the special property of God. "It is you Jehovah your God has chosen to become his people, a special property, out of all the peoples that are on the surface of the ground." (Deut. 7:6) This close association with the Creator was the best association they could have.

¹³ God blessed the Israelites materially and spiritually. By the many fine commandments he gave them he lifted them up morally, establishing a high standard by which to live. This in itself made them distinctly different from the morally depraved nations that surrounded them. Their national thinking was on what pertained to God and to his righteous laws. Thus popular pressure in their community toward conforming to the majority was good. In the days of Moses they were given healthful teaching and were cared for by overseers whose thinking was upright and whose love was for Jehovah.

¹⁴ Association with that community during the days of Moses was upbuilding and good. Unlike Sodom and Gomorrah, people who loved righteousness could participate

9, 10. Explain why Lot could not have been part of the community where he lived.

11. How did Jesus keep separate from the world in which he lived?

12-14. (a) Why was the nation of Israel a unique community? (b) How did it provide right associations?

in its activities and become a part of it with no danger of becoming corrupted or losing the favor of Jehovah God. Here was a community that provided right associations. Many good people who were not Israelites saw this and made themselves a part of it.

¹⁵ The unusual association that the Israelites had with God meant blessings for them as long as they continued to stay close to him. By following his instructions and obeying his commandments they were, in a sense, walking with him along life's path as companions walk together. Moses spoke about this when he said in a speech near the end of his life: "Jehovah will establish you as a holy people to himself, just as he swore to you, because you continue to keep the commandments of Jehovah your God and you have walked in his ways."—Deut. 28:9.

¹⁶ This expression 'walking with God' is used elsewhere in the Bible with reference to faithful men who cherished their association with him. Enoch and Noah are both mentioned as having walked with God. (Gen. 5:24; 6:9) The same is said about the tribe of Levi at Malachi 2:6: "The very law of truth proved to be in his mouth, and there was no unrighteousness to be found on his lips. In peace and in uprightness he walked with me." These men wisely chose companionship with the Wisest of the wise, as this was the way to life.

FRIEND OF GOD

¹⁷ Although God favored the nation of Israel, friendship with him is not restricted by nationality. This was pointed out by the apostle Peter: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works

righteousness is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35) He does not limit his friendship but is willing to extend it to all who are willing to walk with him. Abraham was called the friend of God because he had faith and always treasured his close relationship with Jehovah. (Jas. 2:23) Persons from all nationalities and races who manifest the same faith can enjoy God's friendship, and that friendship means life for all who continue loving him. "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him."—Jas. 1:12.

¹⁸ Seeking the companionship of wicked people is a sure way of losing the friendship of God. The Israelites were warned of this time and again, but they ignored it and finally did lose his friendship. They are a classic example of what happens when a people seek wrong associations. While they were still at Mount Sinai, God commanded them: "You may not conclude a covenant with the inhabitants of the land." If they did, it would mean close association with those degenerate people, causing them to be under a bad influence. "They will certainly have unfaithful intercourse with their gods and sacrifice to their gods." (Ex. 34:15) But the Israelites ignored that command and were corrupted in their worship. "Even to their judges they did not listen, but they had unfaithful intercourse with other gods and went bowing down to them. They quickly turned aside from the way in which their forefathers had walked by obeying the commandments of Jehovah."—Judg. 2:17.

¹⁹ Instead of staying close to God as loving companions, they associated with the Canaanites, and, like clay, were molded into a likeness of those degraded people.

15, 16. (a) What does it mean to walk with God? (b) Give examples of persons who have done this.
17. Who may be a friend of God, and what does his friendship result in?

18-20. (a) How may God's friendship be lost? (b) What effect did bad associations have upon the nation of Israel?

How could God continue to consider them as friends when they had disobeyed him and turned their backs to him in order to worship the detestable idols of the Canaanites? This wrong association led to the destruction of their national house. "On account of their leaving my law that I gave to be before them, and because they have not obeyed my voice and have not walked in it, but they kept on walking after the stubbornness of their heart and after the Baal images, about which their fathers had taught them; . . . 'I will scatter them among the nations that neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will send after them the sword until I shall have exterminated them.'"—Jer. 9:13, 14, 16.

²⁰ A person who has had God's friendship and then seeks friendship with the world and participates in its unrighteous deeds will lose His friendship just as the Israelites lost it. Because the world belongs to the great adversary of God, friendship with it makes him an enemy of God. "Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." (Jas. 4:4) A friend of God must be as separate from this corrupt world as Noah and Lot were from the wicked world in their day.

RIGHT ASSOCIATIONS AMONG CHRISTIANS

²¹ When Jesus preached throughout the land of Palestine crowds gathered around him to listen to the words of wisdom that came from his mouth and to witness his miracles. The hearts of some of those people were so moved by what they heard and saw that they wanted to have close companionship with him, so they became his disciples or followers. After their having chosen this right association, it would have

been inconsistent for them also to have sought the companionship of the wicked scribes and Pharisees who hypocritically pretended to serve God while being friends with the Devil's world. They maintained right associations by remaining close to Jesus. His good influence on their thinking was so marked that, when they spoke, it was evident to their listeners that they had been his companions. "Now when they beheld the outspokenness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were men unlettered and ordinary, they got to wondering. And they began to recognize about them that they used to be with Jesus."—Acts 4:13.

²² Jesus provided right association at a time when the Jewish nation was corrupted by human traditions and human philosophy. Its religious leaders were far removed from God, being more interested in furthering their selfish interests than God's interests. Those who became wise by walking with Jesus were led back to the close relationship with his Father that was enjoyed in the days of Moses. He brought them back to the undefiled worship of God, teaching them how to worship the Creator in spirit and in truth. By the sacrifice of his perfect human life, he opened the way to eternal life for all who would come to him and walk with him as he walks with God. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) "The gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 6:23.

²³ Because Jesus is no longer walking about the earth in the flesh it does not mean you cannot walk with him and benefit from his upbuilding fellowship. Regularly reading in the Scriptures his words of wisdom brings you into close association with him, and by following the ex-

21. Why would it have been inconsistent for Jesus' disciples to have sought companionship with the scribes and Pharisees, and how did they reveal his influence on them?

22. How did association with Jesus benefit his followers?
23, 24. Explain how it is possible to have close association with Jesus today although he is not on earth.

ample of godly devotion that he set you can walk with him as a Christian or follower. "Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely." (1 Pet. 2:21) You cannot follow his steps closely if you have companionship with people who have corrupt minds or who lack love and respect for God's Word. Instead of following Christ's steps you will find yourself following their steps.

²⁴ Aside from his example and the written record about him, there is another means by which you can have association with him. That is by means of the Christian congregation. He said: "Where there are two or three met together in my name, there I am in their midst." (Matt. 18:20) Close association with the congregation brings you into close association with Christ.

²⁵ The beginning of the Christian congregation was at Pentecost when God's spirit was poured out upon Jesus' 120 disciples. They were united by their common interest in God and his Son and were bound together by a common love for righteousness and a desire to walk with God by obeying his commandments. By means of holy spirit that Jesus poured out upon them after his ascension, Jesus was in their midst. He was with them, and they were at unity with him. They formed a Christian community that possessed high moral standards, respect for God's commandments and a firm determination to keep its worship undefiled.

²⁶ Association with this unique community was wholesome. It was good. It was the way to life. Three thousand people realized this on Pentecost and joined themselves with that newly formed organization. "They continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to as-

sociation together, to taking of meals and to prayers." (Acts 2:42) They pooled their money so all could extend their stay in Jerusalem after Pentecost so as to learn as much as possible from Jesus' disciples. When they finally returned to their home towns, they followed Jesus' example by preaching to others, and thus added to the growth of the Christian congregation.

²⁷ The same Christian congregation today provides right association for people who love righteousness. It is not found in the religions of Christendom, for they have followed the footsteps of Caesar and not the footsteps of Christ. Especially from the time of Constantine, religious Christendom has been the bosom companion of the rulers of this wicked world. Like clay she has been molded to be like the companions she has kept. Therefore it should not be surprising to read about her frightful inquisitions and the blood she has shed to further her selfish ambitions. Despite her outward appearance of piety, religious Christendom is exposed by her fruits and bad associations as being an enemy of God. "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light. It is therefore nothing great if his ministers also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness." (2 Cor. 11:13-15) Her masquerade as the Christian church or congregation makes her a deceitful worker that leads people away from God rather than into friendship with him.

²⁸ The Christian congregation is found today closely connected with the New World society of Jehovah's modern-day witnesses and not with Christendom. That society is inseparably united with it. Here

25-27. (a) How was the Christian congregation of the first century united, and why was association with it wholesome? (b) Where are right associations found today, and why can they not be found in Christendom?

28. Where can a community be found today that loves righteousness, and what are the prospects for those residing in it?

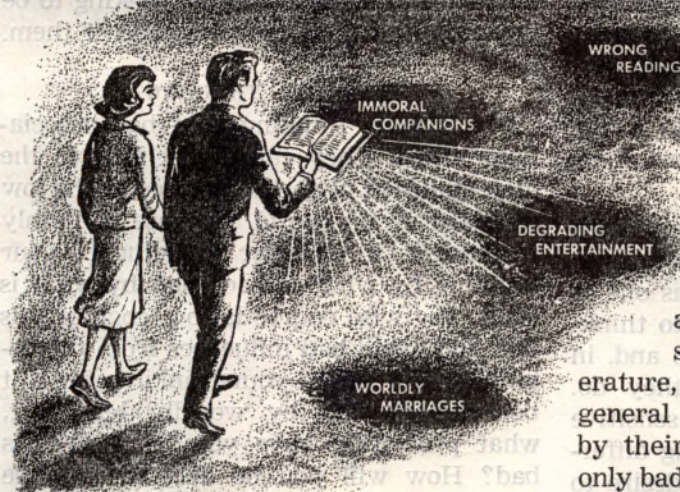
is where you will find a community that loves righteousness and that respects God's commandments as the first-century Christians did. Here is a community that walks closely in Jesus' footsteps by keeping separate from the world as he did, by preaching publicly as he did, and by seeking first the kingdom of God as he did. Here is a community that walks with God while liv-

ing in a corrupt world. This growing, international society consists of the righteous, many of whom will be preserved through the end of the present system of things to inherit the earth. "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Ps. 37:29) With them you will find the right associations that lead to eternal life.

Watch YOUR ASSOCIATIONS

In the Time of the End

"BAD ASSOCIATIONS SPOIL USEFUL HABITS."—1 COR. 15:33.



OUR modern world has reached the climactic period in human history that was foretold long ago to be the end of this worldly system of things. This is the time the apostle Paul spoke about when he said: "Know this, that in the last

days critical times hard to deal with will be here."

(2 Tim. 3:1) What Christians have found to be especially hard to deal with has been the increasingly bad influence that permeates modern society. That which is degraded, degenerate, criminal and violent are the things constantly highlighted in popular literature, plays, movies, TV and radio. The general thinking of the people as revealed by their daily conversation and jokes is only bad all the time. The influence of such thinking does not help a Christian walk in the way that has God's approval.

Ignoring the good principles of the scriptures that teach love for neighbor, the people of this world act like wolves as they fight among themselves to get all they can at the expense of others. Their self-

1. What do Christians find in this modern world that is hard to deal with?

2. How do people of the world act, and why do Christians appear peculiar to them?

ish policy is commonly expressed as "dog eat dog." Because God's servants in the New World society do not follow the selfish and immoral practices of the world, they are like sheep among wolves. Their meekness and desire to live by the moral standards of God's Word make them appear peculiar in the eyes of worldly people. The apostle Peter spoke of this when he said: "Because you do not continue running with them in this course to the same low sink of debauchery, they are puzzled and go on speaking abusively of you."—1 Pet. 4:4.

³ If you are a dedicated Christian in the New World society, it is imperative that you keep your senses in this time of the end and not imagine that you can have companionship with the wolves of this world without being influenced by their thinking. Unless you watch your associations you may cease to be a sheep by acting like a wolf. The apostle Paul was right when he said: "Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:33) Such associations can mold you like clay into a dishonorable vessel and spoil your usefulness in God's organization.

⁴ When you seek companionship with any group of people, it is a natural desire to want to be accepted by them as one of the crowd. This pressures you into thinking as they do, acting as they do and, in some cases, even dressing as they do. Young persons are particularly sensitive in this regard, as they dread being different from their companions. The desire to be accepted can lead you into trouble when your companions are persons who do not love Jehovah God and do not respect his standards. Their association is spiritually and morally unhealthy. Through fleshly desires and weaknesses they will tempt

you into doing what you know is bad. Notice what the apostle Peter said about this: "They utter swelling expressions of no profit, and by the desires of the flesh and by loose habits they entice those who are just escaping from people who conduct themselves in error."—2 Pet. 2:18.

⁵ In order to earn a living it is often necessary to spend many hours every day working among people who have no love for righteousness or respect for the high moral standards of God's Word. While association with these people cannot be avoided during working hours, you do not have to associate with them after working hours. Why voluntarily put yourself in contact with their bad thinking and unclean chatter? This does not mean you should not be friendly and helpful, but being friendly does not involve companionship. You can work among them, being friendly and helpful, without seeking to be accepted into their crowd as one of them.

EFFECT ON THINKING

⁶ It is your thinking that bad associations affect. They can divert it from the high standard of the Scriptures to the low standard of the world. Because of fleshly weaknesses it is easier to influence your thinking by what is bad than by what is good. The wise course is to recognize this fact and avoid bad influences from the beginning. Safeguard your thinking, for if it becomes twisted by worldly reasoning, what protection have you from what is bad? How will you be able to continue walking the narrow way that leads to life? By allowing worldly associations to influence your thinking you may find yourself walking with them along the broad way to death. "Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road

3. Why is it imperative to watch your associations today?

4. What is the natural desire when one is with a group of people, and why can this lead to trouble?

5. How should association with worldly people at your place of work be viewed?

6, 7. What do bad associations especially affect, and what can they result in?

leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it."—Matt. 7:13, 14.

⁷ The grip you have on the shield of faith depends upon your thinking. When it gets into a wrong channel, your grip loosens and the shield gradually lowers. Allowing your mind to continue in that wrong channel may cause you to lose entirely your grip on the shield of faith, leaving you exposed to worldly brainwashing. You may then become like a washed sow that returns to its wallowing in the mire. —2 Pet. 2:22.

⁸ When you lose your faith you lose the best and most important thing in life. Without it you cannot win God's good pleasure. (Heb. 11:6) Bad companions may make the destroying of your faith their objective, for your desire to do what is right makes them uncomfortably aware of their badness. Instead of reforming, they prefer to corrupt you so you will be like them. If you do not safeguard your thinking, loss of faith can easily entrap you. That is what the apostle Paul warns against at Hebrews 12:1, where he speaks about the sin that easily entangles one. Do not open the way for it by associating with bad companions.

⁹ Single persons who are not living at home often find it advantageous financially to share a room with another single person. When a dedicated Christian finds this necessary, he will be making a serious mistake if he chooses to room with a worldly person who does not share his love for God and for the righteous standards of the Scriptures. Such close contact with a person whose thinking is not Scripturally good can be a corrupting influence on him.

It would be better for him to room by himself than with someone who would be a continually bad influence on his thinking.

¹⁰ Having as companions God's Word and people who love God's Word will help you develop thinking ability that is straight and upright. It will keep guard over you by causing you to recognize what is dangerous to your faith and help you to know what is bad and what is good in the eyes of God. "When wisdom enters into your heart and knowledge itself becomes pleasant to your very soul, thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, discernment itself will safeguard you, to deliver you from the bad way, from the man speaking perverse things, from those leaving the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness."—Prov. 2:10-13.

¹¹ Since your thinking plays such a vital role in your moral and spiritual health, you should be selective about what you feed your mind. As there are many things you can eat that are bad for the physical body, so there are many things that are written that are bad for the mind, that poison your thinking. Worldly philosophy, theorizing and higher criticism that contradict God's Word do not build up your faith, your wisdom or your respect for high moral standards. They plant seeds of doubt that can grow up like choking devil grass and eventually strangle your faith, leaving you without faith and hope. Such literature is the product of Satan's system of things and has as its objective the cutting of you loose from your Scriptural moorings so you will float aimlessly about, "tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of craftiness in contriving error." (Eph. 4:14) The apostle Paul gave warn-

8. Explain what the sin is that easily entangles one, and the relationship bad companions have to it.

9. Why should a single person be careful about selecting the one with whom he rooms?

10. Why is straight thinking ability important in this time of the end?

11, 12. Explain why selectivity in reading matter is vital to the Christian.

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

¹² Why have fellowship with higher critics of the Bible and atheists whose writings can only tear down? Why feed your mind upon the folly of senseless persons who have said in their hearts: "There is no Jehovah"? (Ps. 14:1) Why have fellowship with authors whose thinking produces sordid writings that magnify worldly corruptions, unclean practices and crimes? Why feed your mind upon worldly thinking that tears down? Show as much concern over your mental and spiritual health as you do for your physical health by being selective in what you read and the visual entertainment you watch.

SELECTING MARRIAGE MATE

¹³ When Jacob sought a wife, he did not go to the Hittites as Esau did or to any of the other peoples around him that did not worship Jehovah God. He instead went to the household of Laban, his mother's brother, to find a wife from people who worshiped the God of Abraham. A like wise course had been chosen by Abraham when he selected a wife for Isaac, Jacob's father. Abraham told his servant: "I must have you swear by Jehovah, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in among whom I am dwelling, but you will go to my country and to my relatives and you will certainly take a wife for my son, for Isaac." (Gen. 24:3, 4) These men set a

good example by seeking good associations in the marriage union.

¹⁴ Since bad companions can exercise an unwholesome influence upon your thinking, what can an unbelieving marriage mate do? Would not that one's influence be bad? Would not such a one be a constant source of trouble, making it difficult to do the will of God? Evidently Abraham and Jacob thought so and avoided Hittite and Canaanite women. Centuries after their day the nation of Israel was warned against marriages with persons such as that who did not worship Jehovah. They were required to follow the example set by Abraham and Jacob. "You must form no marriage alliance with them. Your daughter you must not give to his son, and his daughter you must not take for your son. For he will turn your son from following me and they will certainly serve other gods, and Jehovah's anger will indeed blaze against you and he will certainly annihilate you in a hurry."—Deut. 7:3, 4.

¹⁵ The Israelites failed to obey God's command and failed to follow the wise example of Isaac and Jacob, their forefathers. They leaned on their own understanding and mingled with the pagans in the Promised Land, foolishly intermarrying with them. "The sons of Israel dwelt in among the Canaanites, the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. And they proceeded to take their daughters as wives for themselves, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they took up serving their gods." (Judg. 3:5, 6) Their bad associations corrupted their useful habits and turned them away from their Creator, as they were forewarned.

¹⁶ Despite Solomon's wisdom he made the mistake of taking wives that had for-

13, 14. (a) What examples do we have of wisdom being shown regarding the selection of a wife, and why was the course followed wise? (b) What command does God give on the matter?

15. How did intermarriage with unbelievers affect the Israelites?

16, 17. Explain what we can learn from Solomon's mistake, and what reprimand did Nehemiah give to the repatriated Israelites?

eign ways of worship. In time they succeeded in twisting Solomon's thinking so that he took up their false forms of worship and ended his reign with God's anger blazing against him. If bad companionship could cause a man of Solomon's wisdom and greatness to fall from God's favor, can it not do the same to you? Do you think you are wiser than Solomon and can marry outside the New World society without endangering your position in it? You are deceiving yourself if you think you can.

¹⁷ Nehemiah recognized the danger of taking a mate who lacks love for God and reprimanded the Israelites who had returned from captivity to Babylon for doing it. Some were following the example of Solomon rather than the example of Jacob. "You should not give your daughters to their sons, and you should not accept any of their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Was it not because of these that Solomon the king of Israel sinned? And among the many nations there proved to be no king like him; and loved of his God he happened to be, so that God constituted him king over all Israel. Even him the foreign wives caused to sin." —Neh. 13:25, 26.

¹⁸ If you are single and contemplating marriage, why endanger your relationship with Jehovah God by repeating the error made by the Israelites and by King Solomon? Why marry someone who may be compared with the Canaanites because of unbelief? If you cannot find a prospective marriage mate who is dedicated to God as you are, wait until you can. Do not jeopardize your Christian integrity by becoming yoked with an unbeliever. "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14)

18. What should a single person today do if he is contemplating marriage?

Heed the wise counsel in the Scriptures to marry "only in the Lord."—1 Cor. 7:39.

¹⁹ A person who is already married when he becomes a dedicated servant of God must not try to sever his marriage relationship because his mate is an unbeliever. He is bound to his mate and must continue living with her. His circumstances may be difficult, but he must make the best of them, doing his utmost to build up his faith and spiritual strength. (1 Cor. 7: 12, 13) Unmarried persons can avoid such problems by being careful about whom they choose as a marriage partner.

WATCH YOUR ASSOCIATIONS

²⁰ As long as you are in the time of the end of this old system of things and have to live in a corrupt world, you cannot be too careful about your associations. It is difficult enough to stay on the narrow way to life without endangering your footing with bad associations. When you came into the New World society and began walking with God on the narrow way to life, you had to make many changes that were for your own good. The apostle Paul spoke about this when he said: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and complete will of God." (Rom. 12:2) Now that you have transformed your mind from worldly thinking to Scriptural thinking, do not turn back to the old world for companions or for a marriage partner. Did not Jesus speak of worldly people as being spiritually dead when he said: "Let the dead bury their dead"? (Matt. 8:22) All who have begun walking the narrow way to life are spiritually alive in God's eyes; whereas those walking the broad way to death are spir-

19. May a married person separate from an unbelieving mate to avoid bad associations?

20, 21. What transformation takes place upon entering the New World society, and why should you be watchful about associations?

itually dead while they live. Why, then, should the living seek close association with the dead?

²¹ Remember at all times that you are like clay and that the persons you have as companions leave their mark on your thinking. Prolonged association with their thinking, their speech and actions can influence you to be like them. If they are bad companions you will be influenced to join them in their wrong conduct and warped thinking. Do not blind yourself to the danger of bad associations. Heed the good admonition in God's Word and profit from what happened to the nation of Israel and to Solomon for not watching their associations.

²² Seek right associations by staying close to the New World society. Have companionship with your spiritual brothers rather than with unbelievers. The weekly congregational meetings and activity with spiritual brothers in the field ministry provide opportunities for this, as well as circuit and district assemblies. Here is where you should seek friends and prospective marriage partners. Here is where you will find right associations that are a good influence for you, that help you safeguard your thinking ability and that aid you in walking with God on the narrow way to life.

²³ Do not permit the physical attractiveness of worldly persons to move you to want to be companions with them. Physical beauty is only on the surface. What counts is what is in the heart. The people of Noah's day undoubtedly exceeded by far this present generation for physical beauty, but their hearts were bad. They were so ugly spiritually that they were not worthy of continued existence. So when you **look** for a mate or a friend, look beyond

the surface. Look for spiritual beauty.

²⁴ Use the Bible as your basis for determining whether a person is a suitable companion or not. See if his thinking and actions are in harmony or out of harmony with it. Does he have respect for Scriptural standards of righteousness? Does he make a sincere effort to apply Scriptural principles in his daily living? Does he put God's interests first in his life? Does he have the attitude David manifested: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts"? (Ps. 40: 8) Is he dedicated to serve God? These and other questions you can ask yourself. When you see that his actions and mental attitude are Scripturally good, you can be sure that the person's association will be good.

²⁵ It is not the person whose mind is on the things of the world that can help you to be among those who will survive the end of this old world. He will hinder, not help you walk the narrow way that leads to life in God's new world. If you maintain close association with such persons this side of God's war of Armageddon, you run the greater likelihood of not reaching the other side of it. As the seven persons who survived the flood with Noah watched their associations in the time of the end of that world, so you must watch your associations in the time of the end of this world.

²⁶ You have the prospect of eternal life ahead of you in surroundings that will be free from the wickedness and corruption that dominate the present world. If you rejoice at that prospect and anxiously look forward to the righteous conditions that are Scripturally promised for that time, why try to find pleasure or companionship in the company of persons who contribute to making the present world the unrighteous place it is? Why seek as friends per-

22. Where are right associations found?

23-25. (a) In what way should a Christian choose a suitable companion? (b) What can prevent you from being among the survivors of Armageddon?

26. What is the prospect for the future, and what course should be taken now to realize that future?

sons who will have no place in God's new world? Do not endanger your future with such bad associations. Fill your mind with what is good and upbuilding to your faith by being selective in the people you choose to have as close companions, in what you

read, in the visual entertainment you watch and in the conversation you listen to. Preserve good relations with Jehovah God and safeguard your Christian integrity by seeking right associations in this time of the end.

Exhibiting Unity of All Men of Good Will

This is a divided world. Helping to make it so are pride of nation, racial prejudice, education and social culture, rivalries, selfish ambitions, personal jealousies and envies. In particular have totalitarian powers succeeded in dividing religious organizations by severing their relations with their governing bodies outside their own country, inducing them to set up an independent organization willing to submit to totalitarian headship and promulgate its propaganda.

These factors, however, exert no influence on those who belong to the New World society. On the contrary, here we see the fulfillment of such scriptures as: "Look! how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" "I make request, . . . that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in union with me and I am in union with you, that they also may be in union with us." "In unity I shall set them, like a flock in the pen." Yes, of them it is true even as it was of the early Christians: "The multitude of those who had believed had one heart and soul."—Ps. 133:1; John 17:20, 21; Mic. 2:12; Acts 4:32.*

What accounts for this unique and remarkable unity? First of all, their united allegiance to the kingdom of God and to their one King, Shepherd and Leader, Jesus Christ. They pray to God, "Let your kingdom come," and they "keep on . . . seeking first the kingdom." They recognize Jesus Christ as "the King of those who rule as kings," as the one whom Jehovah gave "as a leader and commander to the national groups," and as "the right shepherd."—Matt. 6:10, 33; 1 Tim. 6:15; Isa. 55:4; John 10:14.

Another unifying factor is the spirit of Jehovah God: "If we are living by spirit, let

us go on walking orderly also by spirit." The fruitage of this spirit is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." Such fruitage serves to unify true Christians, and in particular does love, even as we read: "Clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union."—Gal. 5:25, 22, 23; Col. 3:14.

Important also is the power of the truth, the increased light that God is causing to shine upon his Word, resulting in his people speaking, as it were, a new language, a pure language: "Then I shall give to peoples the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him with one shoulder," or in unity.—Zeph. 3:9, *margin*.

To keep this unique unity among those of the New World society we must be on guard against any divisive forces. Since God "made out of one man every nation of men," and since God so loved the whole world of mankind as to send his Son to die for them, Jehovah shows no partiality to any due to nationality or race. Yes, among Christians "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female." We must also be on guard against letting personalities divide us: "Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another."—Acts 17:26; Gal. 3:28; 5:26.

Further, we want to exercise care lest we become spotted by the world, for that also would cause division. Among such spots would be compromise as to our allegiance to God's kingdom, as when a Christian would violate his neutrality in regard to the nations of the world, and watering down God's high

* For details see *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1960.

principles as to moral conduct.—Jas. 1:27; 1 John 2:15-17.

How can we be exhibiting this unity of all men of good will so as to help others take their stand for Jehovah and his kingdom? First of all, by associating with one another in all the various features of the Kingdom ministry, and in particular by sharing in the house-to-house ministry offering valuable Bible aids to all, and making return visits to assist interested ones. "Standing firm in one spirit, with one soul fighting side by side for the faith of the good news," we also exhibit this unity by presenting the same message, teaching the same truths. As the prophet Isaiah long ago foretold: "Listen!

your own watchmen have raised their voice. In unison they keep crying out joyfully." —Phil. 1:27; Isa. 52:8.

During the summer months the world will see a dramatic example of the unity of Jehovah's people as in their many thousands they converge from afar on the district assemblies held in Canada, Europe and the United States. Let no one of good will toward God who can possibly do so fail to attend at least one of these exhibitions of Christian unity. May one and all catch the spirit of the psalmist David when he sang out: "O magnify Jehovah with me, and let us exalt his name together." And truly we do have much cause for praising Jehovah, do we not?—Ps. 34:3.

What Does It Take to Make a Christian?

♦ Millions of dollars every year are contributed to the advancement of missionary work in non-Christian countries. Thousands of persons in far-flung parts of the globe are won to Christianity by the material benefits they receive as a result of these contributions. But are such converts real Christians? Is their motive for professing Christianity as their religion a proper one? Is it strong enough to stand in a time of trial and test? An incident reported in the *Ottawa Journal* of May 28, 1960, sheds light on the answer to these questions.

♦ In a remote section of the Philippine Islands a missionary doctor once noticed a most disconsolate Igorot sitting by the roadside. The poor native looked so absolutely wretched that the doctor stopped and asked what was the matter. The man despondently answered that he felt very bad. The doctor asked why. When the Igorot said that the bishop was coming the next day, the missionary reassured him, and said that the bishop was a good man, and would not hurt anybody.

♦ The native promptly agreed, and said warmly that he liked the bishop. "Then," asked the doctor, "what is wrong?" "When he was

here last," came the reply, "he gave me a hat and I became an 'Episcopalian.'" "That's fine. It is a good religion," assured the doctor.

♦ The native then began to explain that a little later a Catholic priest came along and gave him a pair of trousers and he became a Catholic. "Well," said the doctor, "Catholicism is also a good religion." Sadly the native said that the priest was now gone and the bishop was coming back, and he did not want to make the bishop unhappy. The old fellow looked so sad as he pondered his problem that the missionary finally asked him

which group he would choose. "I think," said the native, "I will give back the hat to the bishop and the pants to the priest, and just be a pagan again."

♦ This may appear as just a humorous story; however, it underlines this distressing fact—many have accepted

Christianity not because of heart appreciation but because of its popularity and the material benefits it brings. This is true not only in non-Christian lands but also among those professing to be Christian nations. If faced with a similar situation, how many of today's Christians would resemble the old Igorot who wanted to give back the hat and the pants and just be a pagan again?

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- The Source of All Dynamic Energy and Vigorous Power.
- Become Activated by the Spirit of Jehovah.
- Faith in Faith—Is That Your Faith?
- Evil—Does It Harden You?
- A Time and Place for Everything.

The Traitorous "EVIL SLAVE" and His PROTOTYPES

"'AXIS SALLY' to Be Paroled in July." Thus read a headline in the *New York Times*, April 8, 1961. Who is this Axis Sally? She is an American artist who went to Germany to study music in the 1930's. When World War II broke out she nightly sang over the radio a sex-laden siren song to the American soldiers, tempting them to quit fighting and to return home. Why? Had she become converted to the Nazi ideology? Not at all! She sang for a price, being the highest-paid performer on the Nazi network.

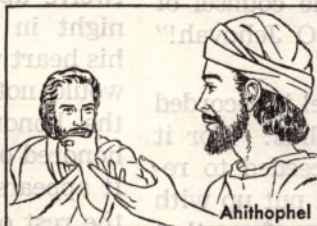
This present-day example of perfidy calls to mind America's first notorious traitor, one Benedict Arnold. A proud and arrogant man who continually was at loggerheads with the governing bodies of the colonies and fond of lavish living and material gain, he sold his services to the enemy of his people at the time they were fighting for their independence. He spent his closing days in a foreign land, socially ostracized and most unhappy.

While our concern here is not with political but with religious traitors, these political traitors throw light on the two basic traits of traitors, namely, pride and greed. They stifle wisdom, justice and love for the sake of selfish gain. Since man must live with himself and it is not good

for him to be alone, the traitor is bound to make life miserable for himself.

In the Holy Bible three traitors stand out: Ahithophel, the one-time companion of King David; Judas Iscariot, the one-time companion of Jesus Christ, and the "evil slave," one-time companion of the "faithful and discreet slave" of our time, in this day of Christ's second presence. The latter, however, is not a mere individual, but a class of traitorous individuals.

The term "traitor" is one of the most loathed expressions of the English language, even worse in connotation than the word "hypocrite." It comes from a Latin root meaning "to give up, to deliver, to betray." A traitor is one who is treacherous, perfidious, faithless, false, disloyal. The term itself appears only once in the *Revised Standard Version* and the *New World Translation*; at Luke 6:16, where the list of the twelve apostles closes with the words, "and Judas Iscariot, who turned traitor."



Ahithophel



Judas Iscariot

AHITHOPHEL

What causes a person to become a traitor is well illustrated by proud and greedy Ahithophel. A traitor is often uncommonly brilliant;

what he lacks is honesty and love. Such a traitor was Ahithophel, counselor of King David, concerning whom it was written: "The counsel of Ahithophel, with which he counseled in those days, was just as when a man would inquire of the word of The true God. That was the way all the counsel of

Ahithophel was both to David and to Absalom." Why did he turn traitor? The record does not state, but the inference is clear that Ahithophel joined the insurrection of Absalom against his father King David because it seemed quite certain that Absalom would win out. But Jehovah saw to it that things turned out differently.—2 Sam. 16:23.

Absalom, a favorite son of King David, was a most handsome man. At one time he had been banished for having murdered one of his half brothers for having violated his sister Tamar. David mercifully forgave him and restored him to the court. In rank ingratitude for this mercy Absalom schemed to turn the hearts of the people away from his father and then hatched a conspiracy to usurp his father's throne, succeeding in persuading even Ahithophel to join him. When David heard about this he prayed: "Turn, please, the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness, O Jehovah!"—2 Sam. 15:12, 31.

The blackness of Ahithophel is recorded for us in one of David's psalms: "For it was not an enemy that proceeded to reproach me; otherwise I could put up with it. It was not an intense hater of me that assumed great airs against me; otherwise I could conceal myself from him. But it was you, a mortal man who was as my equal, one familiar to me and my acquaintance, because we used to enjoy sweet intimacy together; into the house of God we used to walk with the throng. He has thrust out his hands against those at peace with him; he has profaned his covenant. Smoother than butter are the words of his mouth, but his heart is disposed to fight. His words are softer than oil, but they are drawn swords."—Ps. 55:12-14, 20, 21.

In addition to praying to God to thwart the counsel of Ahithophel, David did what he could do to that end, namely, he sent his

counselor Hushai to feign loyalty to Absalom and offset the wise counsel of Ahithophel. In this way Jehovah answered David's prayer, for when Ahithophel gave good advice, Hushai counseled otherwise and Absalom heeded Hushai. The result was that Absalom lost the initiative and in the end also lost his life. As for vain and proud Ahithophel, when he saw his good advice spurned, he returned home, "gave orders to his household and strangled himself and thus died."—2 Sam. 17:14, 23.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Ahithophel was a fitting prototype of the most infamous, the most notorious traitor of all time, Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for a paltry thirty pieces of silver. Judas Iscariot had been chosen to be one of the twelve apostles after Jesus had spent all night in prayer and so, without doubt, his heart was not bad at that time or Jesus would not have chosen him to be one of the honored twelve. But gradually this honored one let selfishness enter his heart. It appears that he was a Judean, whereas the rest of the twelve were Galileans, and Judeans did think themselves to be much better than the Galileans.

Judas Iscariot had been appointed treasurer of the group that followed Jesus, particularly the twelve, quite likely because of his having a better education. As time went on, however, he let *selfishness* get the upper hand. Being fully trusted, he saw how he could steal from the general fund without anyone knowing about it, and he did not scruple to yield to this temptation. As his heart went bad, Jesus noticed it, and so we read that "initially Jesus knew who were the ones not believing and who was the one that would betray him." "I chose you twelve, did I not? Yet one of

you is a slanderer," or devil.—John 6:64, 70.

Here we see in Judas the two basic characteristics of the traitor: pride and greed. Jesus Christ had left heavenly glory to serve God and man unselfishly as a mere man; but Judas Iscariot followed him for self-gain. He was living a lie. Could anything be more perfidious? But Judas was not to get away with this. Sooner or later the truth would out. The occasion came when he found fault with Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, because she anointed Jesus with costly perfumed oil. Judas had objected: "Why was it this perfumed oil was not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?" Jesus rebuked him, saying: "You have the poor always with you, but me you will not have always."—John 12:5, 8.

Judas Iscariot could have taken this rebuke, had his objection been sincere, but it was not. John tells us why he objected: "Not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money-box and used to carry off the monies put in it." So in a malicious rage Judas Iscariot "went to the chief priests and said: 'What will you give me to betray him to you?' They stipulated to him thirty silver pieces. So from then on he kept seeking a good opportunity to betray him."—John 12:6; Matt. 26:14-16.

The degree of Judas' perfidy is further apparent when we note that he had the temerity to ask, "It is not I, is it, Rabbi?" when Jesus said that one of the twelve would betray him. And what blackness of heart conceived the idea of betraying his Master with a kiss, symbol of the devotion he feigned to have for Jesus, as well as serving to point him out unmistakably in case night or its shadows made it doubtful as to which one was Jesus Christ.—Matt. 26:25, 48, 49.

The arch traitor afterward felt remorse,

but to no avail; he had gone to the point of no return. His traitorous act was not due to being momentarily overtaken in a fault, as was Peter's denial of his Master. No, with Judas there were involved pride, greed, malice, hypocrisy, scheming and willful sticking to a predetermined course. Fittingly Jesus termed him "the son of destruction" and said that "it would have been finer for him if that man had not been born." Finer, for not only does he not gain life himself but he covered himself with obloquy or disgrace.—John 17:12; Matt. 26:24.

THE "EVIL SLAVE"

Even as King David was a type of Jesus Christ, so the traitor Ahithophel proved to be a picture of Judas Iscariot. In turn, he and Judas Iscariot foreshadowed the "evil slave," concerning whom Jesus prophesied: "But if that evil slave should say in his heart, 'My master is delaying,' and should start to beat his fellow slaves and should eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know, and will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his part with the hypocrites. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be."—Matt. 24:48-51.

We should expect to see this "evil slave" today. Why so? Because these words of Jesus regarding the evil slave are part of Jesus' great prophecy that finds its fulfillment since 1914. Since that year we have seen the unprecedented wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes and the world-wide preaching of this good news of the Kingdom as foretold at Matthew 24:7-14.

However, as already noted, we are not to expect this evil slave to be a single individual but rather a group of individuals. Thus Jehovah, at Isaiah 43:10, speaks of

his nation of witnesses back there and in our day not only in the plural form as "witnesses," but also in the singular form as "my servant." This is in keeping with the fact that the "faithful and discreet slave," which Jesus mentioned at the same time, is also a group of persons. As has been noted time and again in the pages of this journal, that "faithful and discreet slave" consists of the remaining ones or the remnant of the body of Christ still on earth and is associated with Jehovah's witnesses of the New World society.—Matt. 24:45-47.

From the words of Jesus it is apparent that the evil slave is a traitor. How does he show it? By beating his fellow slaves and by associating with those who are disreputable in God's sight, "the confirmed drunkards," spiritually so. Does he beat his fellows with a literal rod? No, for the laws of the land would not permit that. Rather, he seeks to cause pain to his fellow slaves by hard and bitter speech, by slander, false propaganda, by assertions for which no proof is given nor indeed can be given. This he does both by the spoken and the printed word. He is like Diotrefes, concerning whom the apostle John wrote: He "likes to have the first place among them, [and] does not receive anything from us with respect . . . chattering about us with wicked words."—3 John 9, 10.

Those comprising the "evil slave" class feel they have a grievance. They may have been rebuked, as Judas was, or have been relieved of privileges of service, or may have been unable to fall in line with the progress being made in understanding the truth or in methods of carrying on God's work. But if they were honestly to examine their hearts they would be forced to admit that for a long time their hearts have not been right and that now selfishness, in the form of pride or desire for selfish gain, is blindly goading them on.

That spiritual blindness and love of self-gain go hand in hand Jesus indicates: "The lamp of the body is the eye. If, then, your eye is sincere, your whole body will be bright; but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be dark. If in reality the light that is in you is darkness, how great that darkness is! No one can be a slave to two masters . . . You cannot be slaves to God and to Riches."—Matt. 6:22-24.

Should the tactics of this "evil slave" class disturb us? Not at all. Was it not foretold that he would appear in our day? And, remember, Jesus also said: "Stumblingblocks must of necessity come, but woe to the man through whom the stumblingblock comes!"—Matt. 18:7.

So when we come across statements made by some who were at one time associated with us and now oppose, we should ask ourselves: What is the mental disposition? Is it in line with 1 Corinthians 13:4-8? Or does it breathe the spirit of malice, doubt and strife? Is it a joyful, constructive, peaceful message, or just the opposite? Is commercialism connected with it? Is there a consorting with the enemies of God's people, as in the case of Ahithophel and Judas Iscariot?

The record made by the "faithful and discreet slave" is published for all to read in such publications as *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* and *Faith on the March*. Notice the joyful, loving and kind tone, the logic, the proofs, both scriptures and admitted facts. Note the fruits of the work being directed by the "faithful and discreet slave": the magnifying of Jehovah's name, the numerical expansion in Christian ministers, the clean New World society. If all this evidence is convincing, and indeed it should be, then heed Romans 16:17, 18 by having nothing to do with those that attack and seek to disrupt this noble work, for by their fruits they betray that they belong to the "evil slave" class.

Expressions of Appreciation

ON MARCH 9, 1959, the Kingdom Ministry School began its first class at South Lansing, New York, providing special instruction for overseers in the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses. Since then similar schools have been opened in many parts of the world. How has this provision been received? Just read the following expressions of appreciation and see!

● One of the groups of overseers in the United States, on finishing the school term, said: "We have been taught basic Scriptural principles and their application to our work . . . as overseers. This instruction has been imparted in a most loving and practical manner, similar to the instruction given by Jesus and the apostles to the first-century Christians."

● A group that attended the School in the Netherlands said this about it: "In four short weeks we have been given a superb training in truths, policy and principles which should enable us to appreciate more fully our responsibility toward Jehovah. The clarification of our exact relationship to Jehovah and his theocratic organization was certainly an eye-opening experience to us."

● At the conclusion of their schooling, a group in France appraised it in this way: "We are grateful for the timely counsel that has been assembled together in the instruction book, proving to us that the organisation has attained a maturity never known before and that it is to our eternal welfare to recognise and respect Jehovah's organisation at all times, keeping in step with that organisation and so making progress in our Christian maturity."

● Overseers in Germany too expressed keen appreciation: "Several weeks of intensive training, loving admonition and upbuilding lie behind us, all of which surpassed by far our excited expectations and the joy we experienced when first invited. . . . The united pulsation of the heavenly and earthly organizations was certainly well expressed in school. We are sure that this arrangement will reach out and affect the organization for many years in the future, and we wish to dedicate ourselves anew to showing our appreciation for our Father's undeserved kindness by loyally taking up the Kingdom interests, to the honor of Jehovah

and for the assistance of thousands of our brothers."

● A brother from the Society's Brooklyn headquarters, who is a congregation servant in New York and who attended the School, said this: "The opportunity to enjoy the 96 hours of classroom discussion, coupled with about the same amount of time in private study, added up to a spiritually enriching experience. My life as an overseer has taken on new meaning; my appreciation of Bethel has deepened."

● From Switzerland comes this expression of appreciation: "We consider this training as a further proof that Jehovah is the Great Shepherd of his people, that He is directing his earthly organization and that He is interested in the welfare and progress of every one of His servants. . . . We hope that many more servants may be privileged to receive this training. . . . Our stay here at Bethel has enabled us to look into the very clockwork of the Society and has made us appreciate even more the unselfish service of our brothers at Bethel. Working together with these brothers has been a great joy and enrichment to us. Then too, this course has been a unique occasion to have close contact with other overseers from many parts of the country."

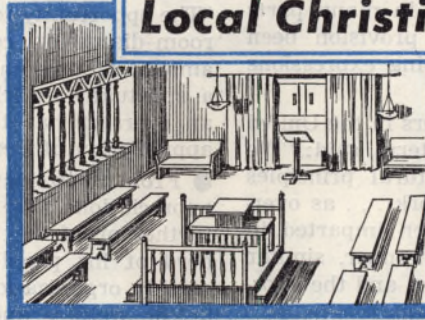
● And showing how much even those in the congregations appreciate the benefits from the School, a sister in a congregation in British Columbia, Canada, wrote this: "I want to express my appreciation for the special training our circuit servant has received, for we surely benefited from it this past visit. Although we have always been uplifted and helped by his visits, this time was so different. The only way I can find to express it is that I feel as though the warm oil of love has been poured on my aching wounds and now I heal without pain. We have suffered much from Satan's onslaughts and the trials of the flesh in the last year or so, and somehow we rather expected to be told definitely that our offerings were lame and blind, but instead, praise and appreciation for what we have done; and, of course, you know the result: we want to do more and more, and we will with Jehovah's help. So thank you for answering our every need as Jehovah directs."

● Surely it is true, as Isaiah 54:13 says: "All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant."

The SYNAGOGUE

Precursor of the Local Christian Assembly

TO MOST Christians today a synagogue is an unfamiliar place. But this was not true of the early Christians. Not only had many of them worshiped in synagogues before becoming Christians, but they were able to observe that their local assemblies were largely patterned after the synagogue.



the "Synagogue of the Freedmen," the "synagogue of Satan," and of certain ones showing partiality when a man in splendid clothing "enters into your assembly [synagogue]."

—Acts 6:9; Rev. 2:9; Jas. 2:2, *ftn.*

Originally the Greek word for "synagogue," *synagogé*, had the same meaning as *ecclesia*, namely, an assembly or congregation. This is seen from the way the verbal root *synágo* was used. A typical instance is that recorded at Matthew 18:20: "Where there are two or three met together [*synágo*] in my name, there I am in their midst." That is why "ecclesia" and "synagogue" are used interchangeably in the Septuagint Bible translation.

As time went on, however, "ecclesia" kept its original meaning—for which reason the *New World Translation*, even as did Tyndale, uses the word "congregation" instead of "church" in translating it—*whereas* "synagogue" took on the meaning of a Jewish assembly place. Still this term did not altogether lose its original meaning, for the Great Synagogue was not a large building but an assembly of noted scholars, credited with settling the Hebrew Scripture canon for the Palestinian Jews. And of the some sixty times that "synagogue" appears in the Christian Greek Scriptures, in some three or four instances it is also used in this sense. So we read of

The Jewish synagogues got their start at the time of the seventy-year captivity or shortly thereafter. In the days of Jesus Christ each town of any size had its own synagogue and the larger cities had more than one. Tiberias boasted of twelve and tradition assigns hundreds to Jerusalem. The custom was to build these on an elevation in or near the town or city and to have them facing east, toward Jerusalem. How the building of them was financed is not clear at this late date, although the Scriptures tell that in one instance an army officer built one for the Jews.—Luke 7:5.

In the synagogue itself, toward the front, was the ark or chest that contained the synagogue's most priceless possessions, the Scripture scrolls. In front also was a speaker's stand and on each side of it 'the front seats in the synagogue,' which the scribes and Pharisees so much coveted. These faced the audience and were occupied by the presiding officers of the synagogue and any distinguished guests. However, it was in the center of the synagogue from which most of the service was conducted, this at

once making it easy for anyone to participate and all to hear. Around the three sides were benches for the audience, with a separate section for women.—Matt. 23:6.

Even as with the synagogues, Christian meeting places were scattered throughout the land, with larger cities having more than one. At first the Jewish synagogues were used, the Christian Jews in Jerusalem also meeting in the temple porticoes, but with time Christians became *persona non grata*, persons not welcome, and so were obliged to meet independently. Among the first separate meeting places were their own homes. When once they began to build they naturally followed the general lines of the synagogue.—Philem. 2.

PURPOSE

In particular did the synagogue serve as the precursor of the early Christian meeting places in regard to its purpose. The Jewish synagogue was, above all else, as noted in the Talmud, a school. It was a place of instruction, teaching, exhortation and encouragement. Pagan religions had absolutely nothing comparable to it.

This was why Jesus and his apostles and early disciples frequently entered the synagogues, to teach, instruct and encourage those present. This purpose was well understood by those in charge of the synagogue, for we read that when Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch in Pisidia and entered the synagogue there one sabbath day and took a seat, "the presiding officers of the synagogue sent out to them, saying: 'Brothers, if there is any word of encouragement for the people that you have, tell it.'"—Acts 13:14, 15.

So also with the early Christian meeting places. Above all else, they were schools, places not merely of praising God and offering prayer, but where public declaration was made of one's hope, where they considered one another to incite to love

and right works and spoke words of encouragement.—Heb. 10:23-25.

FORM OF WORSHIP

Consistent with the synagogue as being a school was its form of worship. It appears to have consisted of praise, prayer, reciting and reading of the Scriptures, exposition and exhortation or preaching. The praise-giving featured the Psalms. Prayers, while taken from the Scriptures to an extent, were cast into a ritualistic mold that was extremely long, the solemnest part of which consisted of nineteen benedictions.

The most important part of the synagogue worship, however, was the reading and the exposition of the Torah. So much was this the case that the Midrash states that without the Torah there could be no synagogue.

Actually, the reading of the Scriptures consisted of three parts. First came the reciting of the Shemá, or what amounted to the Jewish confession of faith. It was taken from Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. It received its name from the first word of the first scripture, "Listen [*Shema*]", O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," and was supposed to be memorized by each Jew and recited not only at the synagogue but twice daily wherever he might happen to be. However, tradition caused them to refrain from pronouncing the name of God itself. Next came the reading of the Torah or Pentateuch, the Law, which was covered in the course of a year, and then a reading from excerpts of the Prophets, known as the Haftaráhs, each with its exposition. At first the Scripture reading had been confined to the Torah, but when for a time the reading of the Torah was banned by their pagan ruler, the Jews began to read from the Prophets. After the ban was lifted the reading from the Torah was restored, but the excerpts from the Prophets were also

kept. Where the Jews spoke Greek the *Septuagint* was used. In other places the reading was from the Hebrew Scriptures in their original tongue and a translator was on hand where necessary to interpret.

When Jesus entered the synagogue of his home town Nazareth, he was handed the scrolls containing the Haftaráhs to read, after which he made an exposition upon it, as was the custom. And it was because of the emphasis on the reading of the Torah that the disciple James could well observe to the members of the governing body at Jerusalem: "From ancient times Moses has had in city after city those who preach him, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every sabbath."—Acts 15:21; Luke 4:17-21.

After the reading of the Torah and the Haftaráhs, together with their exposition, came the preaching or exhortation, which was done from the front of the synagogue, the rest being done from its center. So we read that Jesus taught and preached in the synagogues throughout the whole of Galilee. Likewise Luke records that it was "after the public reading of the Law and of the Prophets" that Paul and Barnabas were invited to speak, to preach.—Matt. 4:23; Acts 13:15.

The basic features of the synagogue worship were carried over into the Christian places of assembly. Here also were praise, prayer, reading of Scripture, exposition and preaching or exhortation and encouragement, although without the ritualistic accretions and without the speculations that the scribes were so fond of. As the apostle Paul described it: "What is to be done, then, brothers? When you come together, one has a psalm, another has a teaching, another has a revelation, another has a tongue, another has an interpretation. Let all things take place for upbuilding. . . . Further, let two or three prophets speak, and let the others discern the mean-

ing. But if there is a revelation to another one while sitting there, let the first one keep silent. . . . let all things take place decently and by arrangement." In time the letters of Paul and others were included in the reading of the Scriptures at these places.—1 Cor. 14:26-33, 40; Col. 4:16.

THE ORGANIZATION

As with other basic features of the synagogue, its organization also served as a precursor or pattern for the early Christian assemblies or meeting places—a point conclusively proved by Vitranga in his *De Synagoga*, the most authoritative book on the subject of the synagogue in the time of Christ, as well as Litton in his book *The Church of Christ*.

Thus in neither the synagogue nor in the early Christian assemblies was there any set-apart sacerdotal class or priesthood, nor even a clergy-laity division. Sharing in the reading and exposition was open to any devout Jew. That is why we read of Jesus preaching and teaching throughout all the synagogues of Galilee as well as "in the synagogues of Judea." His apostles and early disciples did the same, the apostle Paul being the most noteworthy example. As he traveled he taught in one synagogue after the other, in Antioch of Pisidia, Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus.—Matt. 4:23; Luke 4:44; Acts 13:14; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8.

So we find that in the Christian congregation all were to make public declaration and incite to love and right works. All were to have a share in the worship, even as Paul counseled: "For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and be encouraged." Of course, as shown elsewhere, women did not teach or exercise authority over men, and that was true both in the synagogue and in the early Chris-

tian assembly.—1 Cor. 14:31; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12.

While all mature males might thus have a share in the worship, there were some who had certain positions of trust and oversight. As Litton well observes, "The names which such bear in the Christian Greek Scriptures are all derived from the synagogue." The synagogues had presiding officers and overseers and so did the early Christian congregations. (Mark 5:22; Luke 13:14; Acts 20:28; Rom. 12:8) The synagogue had attendants or assistants, and so did the Christians in their form of worship. There was also one called the sent one or messenger of the synagogue. While finding no counterpart in the historical record of the early Christian congregation, a similar designation, "angel," appears in the messages John sent to the seven congregations in Asia Minor.—Luke 4:20; 1 Tim. 3:8-10; Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18.

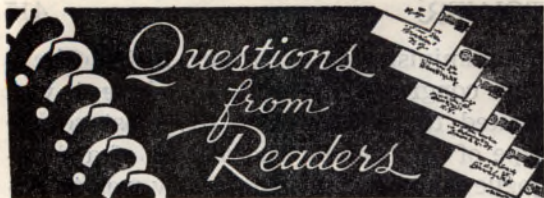
Among other respects in which the synagogue served as the precursor of the Christian assemblies are the following: The local synagogues recognized the authority of the *Sánhedrin* at Jerusalem, even as Christian congregations recognized the authority of the governing body at Jerusalem, as Acts, chapter 15, so clearly shows. In neither were collections taken, and yet in both provision was made for contributions for the assembly and its ministers and for the poor.

Both also served as courts. The synagogue was the place where all minor cases involving Jews were heard and disposed of; and so also the apostle Paul argues that Christians should let the mature ones in the congregation judge matters rather than go to worldly courts to settle differences between themselves. While the synagogue arrangement made provision for

the administering of stripes, in the Christian congregation such punishment was limited to rebukes. But the most severe type of punishment the officers of a synagogue could inflict upon a Jew was to expel him from the synagogue. Likewise the severest measures taken against one professing to be a Christian was and is that of expelling him, disfellowshipping or excommunicating him from the Christian congregation.—1 Cor. 6:1-8; 1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Cor. 5:12, 13.

In view of the foregoing, it is clearly to be seen that the synagogue did indeed serve as the precursor of the local Christian assemblies. Its local and general structure, its purpose, form of worship and organization were indeed carried over into the Christian meeting place. Not, however, without a refinement, both as to manner of conducting the worship, all useless ritualistic accretions being sheared off, and also as to the substance, the emphasis shifting from Law to undeserved kindness and the good news of God's kingdom. And while not all those serving in a special capacity in the synagogue found their counterpart in the Christian assemblies, such as were found did have their prototype in the synagogue. Also, let it be noted that there was no borrowing from pagan sources.

The question may now well be posed: Where today do such organizational arrangements as existed among these early Christians prevail? Where are there assemblies held in the vernacular tongue, in which there are overseers and assistants but no clergy-laity distinction, in which the emphasis is upon the Word of God and which are in the nature of a school? There can be only one answer: at the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's witnesses.



● Is there any objection to celebrating wedding anniversaries?—I. S., United States.

In ancient times birthday celebrations were associated with astrology. No doubt this is why the Scriptures tell only of pagans celebrating them. However, there is nothing in the Scriptures in support of the celebration of one's wedding anniversary, to make it obligatory. Marriage is something for couples to remember every day as to its obligations. Of course, the day of marriage is a joyful occasion—a fact that Jesus recognized by his presence at the wedding feast at Cana. Where the marriage turns out successfully, it would be but natural for a couple to take note of such a happy event annually. In fact, this may be conducive to strengthening the marriage relationship.—John 2:1-11.

Just what arrangements should be made to mark the anniversary and how extensive these would be is for those involved to decide, although it is well to note that here also the rule applies: "Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory."—1 Cor. 10:31.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

"How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" exclaimed the psalmist. (Ps. 133:1) This godly unity will be promoted by Jehovah's witnesses during July as they offer to all people the Bible-study aid "*Your Will Be Done on Earth*" and a booklet, on a contribution of 50c.

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● Habakkuk 3:3 reads: "God himself proceeded to come from Teman, even a Holy One from Mount Paran." This has been used as an argument to show where God came from. Is this the right understanding of this text?—J.F., United States.

No, it is not. Jehovah God is not shown as coming from Teman in the sense of his originating from there or as if this was his place of abode. Jehovah God is without any origin, either on earth or in heaven. He is "from time indefinite to time indefinite." His abode, however, is in the heavens: "The heavens are my throne."—Ps. 90:2; Isa. 66:1.

The prophecy here foretells the coming of God with destructive fury at the battle of Armageddon, which the prophet compares to God's acts in days of old. In vision the prophet sees God coming from Teman, or, as the footnote "e" shows in the *New World Translation*, God is coming from the south. Actually Jehovah in the past did lead his people triumphantly from Mount Sinai to Jerusalem through the land of Teman. Moses' blessing at Deuteronomy 33:2, and Deborah's song at Judges 5:4, 5, refer to the same thing: "Jehovah came from Sinai and flashed forth from Seir [of which Teman is a part] upon them. He beamed forth from the mountainous region of Paran." "Jehovah, at your going forth from Seir, at your marching out of the field of Edom, earth rocked, heavens also dripped, clouds also dripped with water. Mountains quaked at the face of God, this Sinai at the face of Jehovah, Israel's God."

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