



The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

SEPTEMBER 1, 1961

Semimonthly

HOLD YOUR POSITION

AVOID THE PITFALLS

LOVE NEIGHBOR, NOT THE WORLD

RELIGION IN 17TH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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



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

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Announcing
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Number 17

ARE you one who thinks the world is drab, without surprises or meaning, and that you would be better off dead than alive? Maybe it is not the world but you who are at fault. It is amazing what a wonderful difference an improved outlook can make in that which one beholds!

For example, one gloomy day a housewife glanced out of her kitchen window. The sky appeared gray, the view dull and uninspiring. She turned to her work hoping that the world outside would soon brighten up. Just then a window cleaner came along. Soon he was put to work on her kitchen windows washing off the accumulation of dust and smoke. When the housewife turned to look out of her now-washed windows, to her amazement things appeared less dismal. There were the bright colors of the flowers, the soft green grass, the children playing, the trees and the hills in the distance—all these brought her a keener appreciation of the beauty that surrounded her. She realized that nothing about the outside world had changed. She merely had her windows cleaned and was better able to discern the beauty that had been present all the time.

Perhaps we all need mental window washing from time to time, in order that

we may behold less of the drabness of things about us and more of the blessings that are ours to enjoy.

"I never go anywhere," complained a housewife. "I never see anything. I'm stuck away in this apartment and this is where I stay put." Her complaint sounds legitimate enough, but is it worth allowing one's attitude to sour? Having a place to live is a rare blessing in itself. Many people in the world would give much for an apartment to live in. The privilege to see things is also a rare blessing. Put yourself in Ernest Ek's position. For forty-eight years he saw nothing but dark, vague shadows in the daytime and nothing but blackness at night. He was blind. Yet he lived in hope and found life worth living. One day Ek underwent an operation. His sight was re-

stored. To him words now fail to describe what a blessing sight is! Perhaps being tucked away in an apartment may not be the best life, but maybe with a little mental window washing you can learn to appreciate the blessings inside the home, such as your children, your furniture, a good book, the Bible. There are many things inside that can add beauty to life.

Are you handicapped in any way or bedridden? Your misfortune can become a



terrible strain if you allow it to becloud your mental windows and not permit other blessings to shine through. Simply because you are not completely sound of body, must life come to a halt? Nonsense! There are thousands of people like you who are leading active, happy lives. The thing to do is to keep the windows of your mind clear so that you can see out to enjoy the other beauties that life holds forth for you. Use whatever sound members you have in a way that will help others, and soon you will see that it is this fact that makes life worth living. The things we do just to satisfy our own personal desires seem to lose their flavor quickly, but there is a deeper and more lasting satisfaction in meeting the needs of others. Christian shut-ins often find rich enjoyment in writing letters or using the telephone to tell others of their hope in life based on the Bible. It is giving to others that keeps our interest in life alive and makes us look forward to tomorrow. The secret of happiness is in giving. Do not ignore this blessing.—Acts 20:35.

You may have a husband that is an alcoholic or a wife that throws away your hard-earned money in bingo games. Neither of these conditions makes for happy living. But what sense is there in permitting such things to fog the windows of your mind with bitter hate and disgust for life? A drunken husband may not be a pleasure to have around the house, but other things may be. Center your mind on your children, on beautifying and redecorating the interior of your home, on becoming a skilled cook or seamstress, and you will be surprised how much brighter life becomes even with life's problems.

Are you out of work, or do you have two jobs and no time for yourself? Both situations leave men miserable.

Being without work certainly is not pleasant, but all is not lost. Look for the bright side; there usually is one. Your being out of work may give you more time to be with the family, to catch up on some much-needed study and repair work at home. Men who have been unemployed for a long time often allow themselves to become bitter, so bitter in fact that when they do apply for jobs their very cranky dispositions prevent them from qualifying. Guard against a sour disposition by being aware of your blessings.

People who wish they had a little time for themselves are often too busy making money. Materialism has them in a whirl. They are disgruntled because they concentrate on what they do not have instead of appreciating the things they do have. Here is a little bit of sound, inspired advice that can bring them happiness if they but listen to it: "Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things." "To be sure, it is a means of great gain, this godly devotion along with self-sufficiency." (Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:6) The secret, then, is to cultivate an appreciation for the things you do have and delight in them instead of always reaching out for something new and different. Be less wanting, less ambitious, less complaining and the windows of your mind will be open to become more appreciative of the blessings around you.

It is generally those who look for beauty that find it, those who listen for truth that hear it and enjoy its freedom-giving power, those who love that are loved in turn, those who cherish life who enjoy it. Keep the windows of your mind clean to appreciate this fact: "The blessing of Jehovah—that is what makes rich, and he adds no pain with it." Let God's blessings never escape your notice, for they are what make life worth while.—Prov. 10:22.

LOVE NEIGHBOR NOT THE WORLD

IT WAS in the dead of winter and the needy motorist was getting discouraged. For some time he had vainly appealed to passing motorists for help. Finally a truck driver came along and, seeing the plight of the motorist, played the role of the good Samaritan to him. But the helpful deed rankled deep in the breast of the needy motorist. Why? Because, as he himself put it: "My God! Of all those passing by, the one to stop and help should be one of the Watchtower people!" that is, one of Jehovah's witnesses. The truck had the Watchtower name on it and was being driven by a member of the Brooklyn staff of that Society.

These people have built up an enviable reputation because of their fine Christian manners. Professor Bruno Bettelheim, in his recently published book *The Informed Heart* (1960), in telling of his experiences in a German concentration camp describes the Witnesses as "exemplary comrades, . . . the only group of prisoners who never mistreated or abused other prisoners."

Why do some feel antipathy to the Witnesses, while others speak so well of them? Why this difference of opinions? Because of the failure of some to distinguish, as do the Witnesses, between love of the world and love of neighbor. God's Word plainly states that Christians are not to love the world, and just as plainly that Christians are to love their neighbors.

Thus on the one hand we are commanded: 'Do not be loving the world.' And we are warned: "Do you not know

that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." Further, Jesus said that he, his followers and his kingdom were no part of the world and that he did not petition God on behalf of the world.—1 John 2:15; Jas. 4:4; John 17:9, 16; 18:36.

And yet on the other hand Christians are required to 'love their neighbors as themselves,' and to "work what is good toward all." How can Christians love their neighbors and yet not be loving the world, which may be said to consist of their neighbors? In that they distinguish between a "world," "system of things," organization or arrangement and the individuals who comprise that system.—Luke 10:27; Gal. 6:10.

To illustrate: In the United States there are two chief political parties, Republican and Democratic. A good and loyal Republican would certainly not make campaign contributions to the Democratic party, nor would he vote the Democratic ticket or assist the Democrats in their campaign against the Republicans. And should the Democrats be in office he would not fraternize with Democrats merely to get political favors. No, he would do none of these things, out of loyalty to his party. But that does not mean that he would not pay his taxes just because the tax office is run by Democrats. It does not mean that if he has a neighbor who is a Democrat he would not help him in case his

house was on fire, just because he was a Democrat, or that he would not do necessary business with him, buying from or selling to him. Of course not! So he distinguishes between the Democratic political system of things and the individuals comprising that party who happen to be his neighbors.

JESUS SET THE PATTERN

Jesus throughout his ministry clearly distinguished between the two. When Satan offered him his world, that is, all its kingdoms, if he would fall down and do an act of worship to Satan, "Jesus said to him: 'Go away, Satan! For it is written, 'It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.''" He recognized, as the apostle Paul later expressed it, that Satan is "the god of this system of things," and so he exercised care that Satan would 'get no hold on him.'—Matt. 4:10; 2 Cor. 4:4; John 14:30.

But what made that world Satan's system of things was not only Satan's godship of it but also the fact that the elements that ruled it were under the control of Satan, doing his bidding. And what were those ruling elements? Politics, commercialism and false religion. Jesus kept separate and distinct from all three. He did not mix in the politics of his day. He refused to cast in his lot with the Roman government, referring to its representative, Herod Antipas, as "that fox." He did not collaborate with Caesar, but only paid back "Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." He would not even let his own people make him their king, for we read that "Jesus, realizing that they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain all alone."—Luke 13:32; 20:25; John 6:15.

Neither did Jesus get involved in commercialism, in amassing wealth. He coun-

seled his followers to lay up treasures in heaven, not upon earth, and to give their services freely, since he had given them the truth free of charge. In fact, he gave so little thought to material possessions that he had "nowhere to lay down his head."—Luke 9:58.

Far from making common cause with the religious element of Satan's system of things, he lashed out boldly against its representatives. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" "You are from your father the Devil." He was not in favor of interfaith, for, as he explained, "nobody sews a patch of unshrunk cloth upon an old garment . . . Neither do people put new wine into old wineskins." Obviously Jesus did not love the world of his day, Satan's system of things, consisting of politics, commercialism and false religion.—Matt. 23:29; John 8:44; Matt. 9:16, 17.

But how he did love his human neighbors! "On seeing the crowds he felt tender affection for them, because they were skinned and knocked about [by Satan's world] like sheep without a shepherd." He appealed to them: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and become my disciples, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light."—Matt. 9:36; 11:28-30.

He showed his neighbor love by first of all preaching to them the truth about his Father and the good news of his Father's kingdom. For upward of three years he covered Palestine on foot—Galilee, Judea and Perea—preaching and teaching in the synagogues, in the temple at Jerusalem, in the homes of the people, on the mountainside and on the seashore. And to add weight to his message he performed all manner of miracles, curing the sick, feeding the multitudes and even raising the

dead. Surely no man that ever lived on earth before or since showed such neighbor love during his lifetime. And the greatest expression of all he made by giving his life for the life of the world. Did Jesus love the world or wicked system of his day? No! Did he love his neighbors? He certainly did!

LOVE THE WORLD?—NO!

The world has not changed since Jesus' day, even though for most of the readers of these lines Christendom has replaced the Judaism of Jesus' day. Satan is still the god of this world; the ruling elements still are politics, commercialism and false religion. The mere fact that a large part of this world is called Christendom does not make it Christian. How can it be Christian when it fails to recognize God's laws and principles, his will and kingdom? Jesus said: "He that is not on my side is against me, and he that does not gather with me scatters."—Matt. 12:30.

How can a Christian be a part of city, state and national governments when their politics reek with corruption? Hardly a day goes by without some of it being exposed; a particularly well-documented example being "Dirty Money in Boston," which appeared in the *Atlantic* magazine, March, 1961. In a city proud of its religiousness, indifference to corruption has reached a new high. Surely no sincere Christian could have anything to do with such crooked politics. "Bad associations spoil useful habits."—1 Cor. 15:33.

What is Christian about the ruthless and basically dishonest commercialism of today? Recently officials of some of the leading corporations of the United States were imprisoned because of cheating the Government and others out of millions of dollars. Big business stops at nothing for the sake of profits: it corrupts youth with pornographic entertainment and violence;

it corrupts the politicians by bribes, direct and indirect; it corrupts the family man by employing prostitutes. Well does the apostle warn: "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Tim. 6:10.

And what about the popular religions of Christendom? Their making common cause with corrupt politicians and ruthless and dishonest commercialism is enough to condemn them; so is the fact that, while religions are greatly increasing in numbers, the morals of society are steadily deteriorating, and so is their confusion of conflicting creeds. According to God's Word Christ is not divided, but the religion of Christendom is, and that not only into many sects but some of the individual sects themselves are, in turn, split up into as many as a score of denominations, stridently testifying to their inability to get along harmoniously with one another.—1 Cor. 1:13.

Clearly, then, a sincere Christian, one dedicated to do the will of God, cannot be a part of Satan's world as such. He uses the world in that he takes advantage of its facilities, paying for the benefits received. But he does not become part of it, he is not sucked in by its greed, ambitions, allurements, temptations, the way one of the apostle Paul's co-workers was: "For Demas has forsaken me because he loved the present system of things." No, the Christian heeds the beloved disciple's warning: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the

world. Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—2 Tim. 4:10; 1 John 2:15-17.

LOVE NEIGHBOR?—YES!

But not loving the world does not mean that the Christian today may not or does not love his neighbor. He distinguishes between the system of things under Satan's control and the individuals held captive by Satan, fellow human creatures. He loves his neighbor as himself in that he deals with his neighbor as he wants his neighbor to deal with him. He is always ready to go to the help of his neighbor if circumstances require it, even as did the Christian truck driver mentioned in the beginning of this discussion. Like the Samaritan of Jesus' illustration, he takes advantage of opportunities to be of help to someone in distress. He heeds the command to do good to all men as he has opportunity, but especially to fellow Christians.—Luke 10:30-37; Gal. 6:10.

Yet in their desire to avoid friendship with the world, dedicated Christians may come short on this score. Because they have dedicated themselves to do God's will as Christian ministers they may be inclined to feel that the only kind of assistance they can give another is spiritual, but

not so. That is the most important kind, but there are times when a neighbor needs material or physical assistance, and then such should be given if one is in position to do so, although not getting carried away by sentimentality and so going to an extreme.

Yes, while ever ready to give material assistance according to one's means and the other's need, a Christian may never forget that all lovers of righteousness in the world today are greatly in need in a spiritual sense; they lack knowledge and understanding of Jehovah God, his name, Word and purposes, as well as his will for them. Being diligent to satisfy this spiritual need is the best way Christians can show love, for while "wisdom is for a protection the same as money is for a protection; . . . the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom itself preserves alive its owners."—Eccl. 7:12.

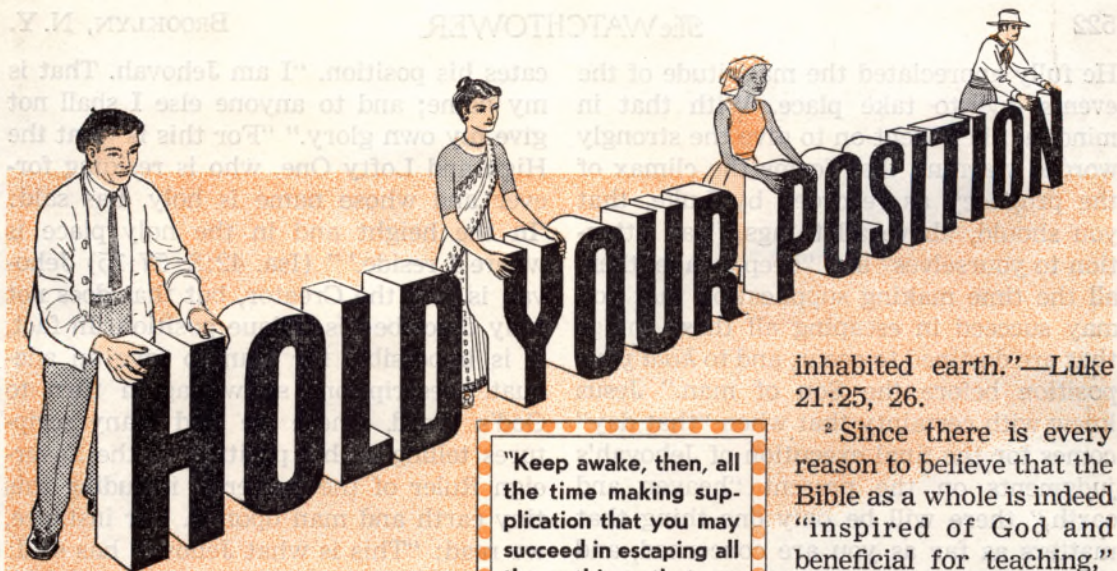
It takes a great deal of love of neighbor on the part of Christians to go regularly from house to house, ignoring insults, indifference and what not, and doing so in all kinds of weather, urging others to learn of God's provisions of everlasting life. At the same time these would not do all this if they loved the world. So should we love the world? No! Should we love our neighbor? Yes!

"Ignorance of Religion"

"In the Philippines, well-meaning Catholics often ask the question: How are we going to check the growth of Jehovah's Witnesses and other similar sects?

The only sure way would seem to be for Catholics to get to know more about their own religion and to practice their religion. Actually, it is ignorance of religion that is the organization's strongest incentive in countries where it is introduced.

For only when we get to know our own religion, and are not merely born into it, when we practice our religion as good Catholics everywhere are expected to, can we never fear that knock on the door by those who aim to present us with a substitute for the Faith in which we were born, nurtured, and live."—*Home Life*, a Catholic magazine printed in the Philippines.



inhabited earth.”—Luke 21:25, 26.

² Since there is every reason to believe that the Bible as a whole is indeed “inspired of God and beneficial for teaching,” including what Jesus himself said and taught, would it not be wise to pay close attention to those things in Scripture having a direct bearing

“Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and to hold your position before the Son of man.”
—Luke 21:36.

SURELY these are days of unequaled stress and strain when nothing appears to hold a secure position. True, human history has ever been a record of evil conditions, injustices, troubles and wars, but never has there been such a continual state of crisis, often breaking out into bitter strife and bloodshed, as has been experienced since the outbreak of World War I in 1914. This has been coupled with tremendous human efforts to establish a new and better order in a firm position, yet this same period is marked with increasing unrest and violence, besides a rising tide of crime and delinquency in almost every country. It would be shutting our eyes to hard facts and figures and a false optimism to say that history is just repeating itself. Rather, it is exactly as Jesus said it would be when giving his great prophecy concerning the time of the end, that there would be “anguish of nations, not knowing the way out . . . , while men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the

on the days in which we are living? More especially will it be wise when we find that our study will have a direct bearing on a vital matter of personal concern to every reader of this magazine. In fact, Jesus said it would heavily involve, not only his followers, but “all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth.” No exceptions anywhere.—2 Tim. 3:16; Luke 21:35.

³ What is this vital matter of personal concern? Look at the prophecy that Jesus gave and you will see. After detailing the many things making up the composite sign giving sure proof of his “presence and of the consummation of the [present] system of things,” he then said: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.” Jesus knew that his return would eventuate in the complete removal of the present system of things.

1. In what way are present conditions unique, and how did Jesus describe them?

2. What bearing does God’s Word have on our day?

3. (a) What climax faces this generation? (b) How did Jesus warn us respecting this?

He fully appreciated the magnitude of the events due to take place. With that in mind, he then went on to give the strongly worded warning that forms the climax of the prophecy as recorded by Luke, that you should, above all things, "pay attention to yourselves" and "keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and to *hold your position* before the Son of man." Jesus knew with certainty that when "that day" comes for the final execution of Jehovah's judgments on the present "heaven and earth," there will be only one thing that matters as far as you are concerned, and that is, Will you prove to be among those who hold a position of favor and acceptance before the Son of man? Nothing else will count.—Matt. 24:3, 35; Luke 21:34-36.

⁴ With our attention now focused on the important subject of position, we shall find it a great aid if we first consider the Scriptural viewpoint on this question as far as others are concerned at this same period. What is Jehovah's position in this day, and how does he hold it? What position does Jehovah give to Christ Jesus? What can be said of the position of "the god of this system of things," Satan the Devil, and all who are under his control? Getting the right answer to these questions will help us to appreciate the correct viewpoint on the last question we want to consider, namely, What is the position of God's people in this day, and how can you, as an individual, "hold your position before the Son of man"?—2 Cor. 4:4; Luke 21:36.

Jehovah's POSITION

⁵ Jehovah is the personal name of the true God. Man did not invent or choose that name, but God chose it for himself, and what he says about it in itself indi-

cates his position. "I am Jehovah. That is my name; and to anyone else I shall not give my own glory." "For this is what the High and Lofty One, who is residing forever and whose name is holy, has said: 'In the height and in the holy place is where I reside.'" (Isa. 42:8; 57:15) Jehovah is God the Creator, but that does not fully describe his unique position. In fact, it is impossible for man to give an adequate description; so we again turn to God's Word, where we find many scriptures telling of his position as the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, including this tiny earth and man upon it. For instance, we read: "This is what Jehovah has said: 'The heavens are my throne, and the earth is my footstool.'" He is "the King of eternity, incorruptible, invisible, the only God." He is "Jehovah of armies—he is the glorious King."—Isa. 66:1; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 24:10.

⁶ However, this does not mean that his rightful position is acknowledged by all creatures in heaven and earth. God's Word tells of treason and rebellion, first breaking out in heaven, then on earth. (Ezek. 28:13-16) This has in actual fact never weakened or seriously threatened Jehovah's position. Rather, we must say that he permitted it for a strictly limited period and for certain wise ends that he had in view. When that time limit is reached, as we believe is already the case, Jehovah does not need to change his position, but merely to assert the authority thereof in unmistakable terms in carrying out his purpose. Yes, Jehovah has a definite purpose as well as a definite position, and we do well to consider the more pointed question, What are Jehovah's particular purpose and position in this our day, and how does he hold them?

4. On the subject of position, what questions arise?
5. How do God's Word and name help us to appreciate his position?

6. Has Jehovah's position ever been threatened by rebellion?

⁷ First, though, we may point out that man finds himself in an astonishing position today. Ignoring God to a large extent for all practical purposes, and filled with a sense of achievement in conquering outer space, as he is pleased to think, man sees the possibility of attaining what he calls the "ultimate position," that is, the point somewhere in outer space that will give the possessor thereof control, total control, over all the earth. But have no fear. As previously explained in this journal, it is Jehovah alone who occupies the "ultimate position" as the Supreme One over the whole universe, far beyond man's reach; and the apostle John was given a thrilling vision in symbolic terms of this "ultimate position" and the One who occupies it. Very significantly, the first thing that John sees and describes in this vision is a throne: "And, look! a throne was in its position in heaven, and there is one seated upon the throne." This deeply impresses us with the fact that the rightful rulership of Jehovah as the Most High must be given first place above all else. It can also be said that recognition of that fact will help you above all else to "hold your position" in the day of final judgment.—Rev. 4:2; Ps. 47:2; see *The Watchtower*, 1958, pp. 660-662.

⁸ We can also learn something from that vision as to how Jehovah holds his position. Let no false comparison be made. The rulers of this world seek to maintain their position mainly through strength, fighting strength. Wisdom, shrewdness and diplomacy, all these things come into it, but overwhelmingly it is a question of power. True, "Jehovah of armies" is all-powerful, but we should not think that he

maintains his position just by force. Notice the reason why those symbolic "living creatures offer glory and honor and thanksgiving to the one seated upon the throne" in grateful worship, together with the "twenty-four persons of advanced age," symbolic of the entire Christian congregation. With one accord they say to Jehovah God: "You are *worthy*." No coercion. They are not frightened into saying it. There is nothing terrifying in that beautiful and lofty description of the One occupying the throne, likening him to rich and exquisite gems, exceedingly pleasant and inviting, causing endless wonderment and admiration. Jehovah is a God of moral excellence, a God of love; and it is love that is the binding force uniting all God's creatures that will live forever in his universe, ascribing to him the glory and honor due to his matchless position as the creative Center of all things. Likewise, it is love for Jehovah, that unbreakable attachment, delighting to do his will in wholehearted and unselfish devotion, that will enable you to be counted worthy of holding your position in the crucial test.—Rev. 4:3, 9-11.

⁹ Though Jehovah's position never changes, there are many expressions in the Bible that tell of him assuming kingly power at a certain time. For example, those twenty-four persons just mentioned are heard by John, in a later vision, saying: "We thank you, Jehovah God, the Almighty, the one who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and begun ruling as king." To get the right understanding of this we must take into account the position that Jehovah gives to his beloved Son, Jesus Christ.—Rev. 11:17; see also Ps. 93:1; 96:10; 97:1.

7. (a) Why will man never gain the position of ultimate control? (b) What vision was given to John respecting this?

8. On what basis does Jehovah hold his position, and what false comparison must be avoided?

9. Does the Bible speak of God assuming kingly power, and how only can this be understood?

THE POSITION GIVEN TO JESUS CHRIST

¹⁰ As part of the composite sign earlier referred to, Jesus said: "And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." This would be in fulfillment of the vision given to the prophet Daniel, where he saw coming "with the clouds of the heavens" a "son of man," who is given "rulership and dignity and kingdom" by Jehovah, the enthroned "Ancient of Days." As has often been shown from the Scriptures in these columns, this was fulfilled A.D. 1914, at the expiration of the "appointed times of the nations," when Christ began to rule as king. It is in this way and through this kingdom under Christ that Jehovah can be said to assume kingly power, and it is by this means that he will assert his authority in no uncertain terms. When on earth Jesus said: "For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son," and shortly after his resurrection he said: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth." But he knew he would first have to sit and wait at his Father's right hand until the due time to receive the rulership and kingdom before exercising that authority and executing that judgment.—Luke 21:27; Dan. 7:13, 14; John 5:22; Matt. 28:18; Ps. 110:1.

¹¹ What an honorable and responsible position! No wonder Jesus expressed himself so forcefully and with such great concern on the need to "hold your position before the Son of man" as God's duly appointed judge and king. Why is he given this position? Listen again to those in close attendance at Jehovah's throne as they see him as the Lamb take the scroll "out of the hand of the one seated on the throne." John hears them "sing a new

song, saying: 'You are *worthy*.'" How proved worthy? Because in loving, unselfish devotion he delighted to do his Father's will, even to coming to this earth to lay down his perfect human life in sacrifice as a sin bearer, thus becoming the "Lamb that was slaughtered." As a result, among other things, he was enabled by the merit of his shed blood to purchase a people for God out of mankind who are made "joint heirs with Christ," "a kingdom and priests to our God," and who, with Christ, "will rule as kings over the earth."—Rev. 5:6-12; Rom. 8:17; see also Isaiah 53:5-12.

¹² Perhaps in thinking of the difficulties involved in holding your position before the Son of man you fear he might prove to be a somewhat harsh and severe judge. Not so however. Read for yourself his own description of the rich blessings and grand outcome of his judgment work as recorded at John 5:24-29, blessings of victory over death and of everlasting life. Then notice the fine foundation on which he holds his position as judge, when he says: "I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative; just as I hear, I judge, and the judgment that I render is righteous, because I seek not my own will but the will of him that sent me." (John 5:30) No, the real reason for the difficulties involved is because of someone else, Satan, the Devil, and those also who are caused to operate under his influence and control. Let us look at this side of the picture.

SATAN'S UNENVIABLE POSITION

¹³ What a sorry spectacle! The subject of a taunt-song! It would not be true to say Satan is a usurper, meaning one who seizes a position without authority. Rather, he betrayed the sacred trust connected

10. How do the Scriptures aid us in defining Christ's present position?

11. On what basis is Jesus counted worthy of such an excellent position?

12. (a) Need we fear that the Son of man might be a harsh judge? (b) Who else must be considered on this question?

13. How and why did Satan lose his original position, leading to what wicked ambition?

with his original God-given position as "the anointed cherub that is covering," that is, having the oversight of Jehovah's interests, as well as man's interests, "in Eden, the garden of God." But, as the record says in accusing him: "You began to sin. . . . Your heart became haughty because of your beauty." Later, in 607 B.C., when Jerusalem and her domain were completely desolated by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, when the typical or small-scale kingdom of God was made a ruin, then it was that Satan in the fullest sense became the undisputed "god of this system of things." Then it was that he thought that at last he was really on the way to making that desperate climb up and up above all other positions—but let God's Word itself describe that exceedingly wicked and proud ambition: "As for you, you have said in your heart: 'To the heavens I shall go up. Above the stars of God I shall lift up my throne . . . I shall go up above the high places of the clouds; I shall make myself resemble the Most High.'"—Ezek. 28:13, 14, 16, 17; Isa. 14:13, 14; 2 Cor. 4:4.

¹⁴ Would Satan prove successful? Never! He might blind himself as he does the unbelievers, but in that same sure word of prophecy his terrific fall, from so high to so low and debased a position, is also vividly described at Isaiah 14:12, 15-20. This began to be fulfilled in 1914 when Christ Jesus, as Michael at the head of his heavenly forces, on behalf of the true God Jehovah, fought Satan the dragon, the mimic god, and his forces, and, as a result, "down the great dragon was hurled, . . . down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him." When the meaning of this vision was given to God's servants on earth, then it was that the taunt-song, or "proverbial saying," against Satan began to be sung.—Rev. 12:9; Isa. 14:4.

ISSUE OF RULERSHIP AND WORSHIP

¹⁵ With these respective positions in mind we can gain a clear picture of the issue involved in the present-day situation and the reason for Jesus' strong warning given for our benefit. Did you notice that Satan's proud ambition was not only to scale forbidden heights himself, but also to exalt his throne? Where there is a throne there must of necessity be a kingdom with its subjects ruled over by the occupant of the throne. And, though it may not always be so, there is no doubt in this instance that worship is involved, which means the rendering of reverential homage and respect and adoration. Do not think of this as limited to one who attends a place of worship or goes through some form of religious service or exercise. If one renders obedient service to someone or some organization, whether willingly or under compulsion, looking up to such as possessing a position of superior rulership and great authority, then that one can Scripturally be said to be a worshiper.

¹⁶ Without stopping just now to discuss the many details, nothing stands out more plainly than the issue of rulership and worship as recorded at Revelation, chapters thirteen to fifteen. Observe, first, that all on earth are caused to worship Satan the dragon, also the "wild beast," picturing Satan's entire visible ruling organization. It is the avowed policy of this "wild beast" to blaspheme God, "his name and his residence." To blaspheme means to utter grossly profane and irreverent language toward God and sacred things. Blasphemy is the antithesis of worship. (Rev. 13:4-6) Observe, next, the "image of the wild beast," picturing man's crowning effort to hold the present system of things in position, as seen in the United Nations

14. (a) What debasement is foretold for Satan? (b) How and when will this be fulfilled?

15. (a) What issue was raised by Satan's ambition? (b) How can worship be Scripturally defined?
16. What has been the policy of Satan and the organizations under his control?

(formerly the League of Nations). This organization too has the same policy of demanding enforced worship, "it puts under compulsion all persons," making existence well-nigh impossible unless they openly identify themselves as supporters and worshipers of Satan's organization.—Rev. 13: 15-17.

¹⁷ Then, in strong contrast, at Revelation 14:1-5, is described Jehovah's organization, with Christ the enthroned king in position as "the Lamb standing upon the mount Zion," God's city, and with him the true church, openly identified as worshipers of Jehovah, "the name of his Father written on their foreheads." "No falsehood [or blasphemy] was found in their mouths." Then follow the "glad tidings," which form part of "this good news of the kingdom" now being proclaimed worldwide by Jehovah's witnesses, announcing the right course, which all must pursue if they would hold their position: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived, and so worship the one that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of

waters." Immediately following this the judgment is announced, mentioned twice for emphasis as coming on those who worship "the wild beast and its image," the dwellers at fallen Babylon, Satan's city or organization. No position of favor or acceptance for them! Instead they cry out to their own tottering organizations: "Fall over us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"—Rev. 14:6-12; 6:16, 17.

¹⁸ As a closing scene, read the words of that grand song sung by those who "come off victorious from the wild beast and from its image," saying: "Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, [why?] because you alone are one of loving-kindness? For all the nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous decrees have been made manifest." Jehovah is worthy indeed to hold the rulership and receive the worship.—Rev. 15:2-4.

17. (a) How does Jehovah's organization stand out in contrast? (b) What is the import of the messages at Revelation 14: 6-12?

18. Why is Jehovah worthy of the rulership and the worship?

"No Need of the Sabbaths"

◆ Two Christian writers who lived in the second century after Christ made these interesting comments about sabbaths: "There was no need of the sabbaths, nor festivals, nor oblations before Moses; so now in like manner, there is no need of them, since Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was by the determinate counsel of God, born of a virgin, of the seed of Abraham, without sin."—Justin Martyr (Dial. cum. Triph. sec. 23)

◆ "Let them show me that Adam sabbatized, or that Abel, in presenting his holy offering to God, pleased him by Sabbatic observance, or that Enoch who was translated, was an observer of the sabbath, or that Noah, the builder of the Ark, on account of the great deluge, kept the sabbath, or that Abraham amidst sabbath-keeping offered his son Isaac or that Melchisedec in his priesthood received the law of the sabbath. . . . We have nothing to do with the sabbaths, new moons, and feasts in which God at one time took pleasure."—Tertullian (De Idolatria c. 4 sec. 4; c. 14).

AVOID THE PITFALLS

ON LOOKING closer at the words of warning recorded at Luke 21:34-36, we find that there are certain questions we would like answered. Do Jesus' words apply to all alike, or to some more than others? What is covered by the expression "overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life"? In what way can we "succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur"? What will help us to "pay attention" and "keep awake," and what part does "making supplication" play in this?

² In the first instance Jesus gave that prophecy to a limited audience of four of his disciples, but logically it was really given for the benefit of those disciples of the same kind or class of "chosen ones" who would be living on earth at the time of his second presence. (Mark 13:3, 4; Matt. 24:22) But does it mean that only those of the true church with the heavenly hope set before them would be able to hold their position before the Son of man? For our answer we turn once more to the Revelation, this time to chapter seven. In the first eight verses of this chapter there is clearly pictured the church class or congregation, "the Israel of God," that is, those chosen ones who make up spiritual Israel and who obtain the inheritance that fleshly Israel as a nation failed to obtain. These spiritual Israelites are all "sealed . . . in their foreheads," corresponding to

the same company as described at Revelation 14:1. But are these the only ones who are saved? Christendom may say yes, but what does the Bible answer?—Gal. 6:16; Rom. 11:7; Rev. 7:3.

³ Immediately "after these things" just mentioned, John sees a "great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations," and, look! they are certainly holding their position, "standing before the throne and before the Lamb." Who are these? They are not of the "little flock" of spiritual Israel and do not need to be in heaven in order to enjoy a position of favor, standing before the throne. They are identified as the Lord's "other sheep," with the hope of life on earth set before them, but who first, in company with the remnant of the "little flock" still on earth, must hold their position before the Son of man. And how are they counted worthy of doing so? Listen to what "they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" No doubt about their public acknowledgment regarding to whom they are indebted for salvation and as to whose side they are on respecting the issue of rulership and worship.—Rev. 7:9, 10; Luke 12:32; John 10:16.

UNITED NATIONS

⁴ By taking such a stand these true worshippers avoid that tremendous pitfall, that

1. What questions arise on Jesus' words at Luke 21: 34-36?

2. (a) For whom was that warning primarily given?
(b) Does this imply that only the heavenly class are saved?

3. To whom else is salvation held out, and what is their declaration?

4. (a) Into what major pitfall has Christendom fallen?
(b) Contrast the General Assembly of the U.N. with that of God's organization.

hidden danger, into which the vast majority of Christendom has fallen. What is that? The pitfall of looking to that crowning human effort, the United Nations, as God's instrument for carrying out his purpose and fulfilling the prophecy at Isaiah 2:4, inscribed on a wall in a prominent position at its headquarters at New York city. Those of this "great crowd" appreciate that God's instrument for salvation is not a man-made instrument, but is God's kingdom under Christ. It is true that the major organ of the United Nations is the General Assembly. It is also true that associated with the King, Christ Jesus, at the "city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem," there are "myriads of angels, in general assembly, and the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens." But there the comparison ends, for in the latter "general assembly" there cannot be found a single politician, and certainly no one with the power of veto, as used so often and ruthlessly in that other vital organ of the United Nations, the Security Council. How could there be, when Jesus stressed in his prayer that his true followers, like himself, would keep sanctified and form "no part of the world," and as James stressed when he wrote that "friendship with the world is enmity with God," constituting spiritual adultery in God's sight? This does not mean literally withdrawing from the world, but as Jesus supplicated his Father, saying: "I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one." We, too, today, "all the time making supplication," should include a similar petition for ourselves and all Jehovah's sheep.—Heb. 12:22, 23; John 17:15-17; Jas. 4:4.

⁵ The purpose of the instrument built by man through his own governments and kingdoms is to preserve the present order

under improved conditions. Diametrically opposed to this, the purpose of God's instrument, the kingdom built by "the God of heaven," is to "crush and put an end to all these [man-made] kingdoms, and [then] it itself will stand to times indefinite" and bring in the promised blessings of eternal life and salvation in a restored paradise. It is Christendom's clergy who are responsible for causing the United Nations and its predecessor the League of Nations to be viewed as God's instrument, labeling it "the political expression of the Kingdom of God on earth." They must have overlooked what the psalmist wrote under inspiration at Psalm 127:1: "Unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have labored on it." They must also have overlooked that powerful illustration given by Jesus about the 'discreet man who built his house upon the rock-mass,' holding its position in the day of storm and stress, and, in contrast, about the "foolish man, who built his house upon the sand," and which proved to be a veritable pitfall when the rain and floods and winds came.—Dan. 2:44; Matt. 7:24-27.

CHRISTENDOM'S RELIGIONS

⁶ Really, organized religion as seen in Christendom is the greatest pitfall of all and the most subtle. Read what Jesus said leading up to that illustration just mentioned. He spoke of those who would make much profession, saying: "Master, Master, did we not . . . perform many powerful works in your name?" Will that entitle them to hold their position in the day of final judgment? What an astonishment and a disgrace for them when they are made to hear and experience the judgment pronounced against them: "*Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness*"! Ah! there

5. How do the Scriptures contrast God's instrument with the one built by man?

6. How is Christendom seen to be the greatest pitfall of all?

is the key to the situation. Christendom may be very religious, but she is lawless. She claims to be Christian, yet her leaders and peoples prefer to choose and exercise their own religion their own way; hence her many creeds and churches. Her clergy are the outcome of the falling away foretold by Jesus and the apostles and are the "man of lawlessness" described by the apostle Paul at Second Thessalonians, chapter two. Note that the aspiration of this "man of lawlessness" is exactly parallel to the "god of this system of things." Paul wrote: "He is set in opposition and lifts himself up over everyone who is called 'god' or an object of reverence, so that he sits down in the temple of The God, publicly showing himself to be a god."—Matt. 7:22, 23; 2 Thess. 2:4; Isa. 14:13, 14.

No wonder the issue of rulership and worship is so confused and beclouded in the minds of the people, suffering under "every unrighteous deception." And as Paul so aptly expressed it when he wrote: "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." Therefore, let us keep making supplication that each and every one of us may be preserved from these pitfalls, seeking sincerely at all times to be found 'doing the will of our Father who is in the heavens,' and clearly discerning what is God's instrument. Hold your position by choosing the kingdom of God under Christ and serving its interests.—2 Thess. 2:10; 2 Cor. 11:14, 15; Matt. 7:21.

PERSONAL PITFALLS

⁸ Coming closer home to the more personal pitfalls that Jesus mentioned, "over-

eating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life," let us consider what these things mean and wherein the danger lies. Jesus emphasized these same things in his sermon on the mountain when he pointed out that one who is absorbed in these things, either by the one extreme of overindulgence or the other extreme of being anxious about a sufficiency of these material things for the next day, is in actual fact not going to be a slave to God but to Riches. That is the danger. He will, after all, be no different from all the rest of the people, "for all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing." But Jesus also kindly gave us the remedy for this problem when he said: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." Faithfully attending to such a course will indeed help us to "pay attention" and "keep awake" and our 'hearts will never become weighed down.'—Matt. 6:24-33; Luke 21:34.

⁹ Carefully heeding this right attitude and course of action, we need to add constant supplication on our part. We must never become overconfident, no matter how many years we may have been a dedicated child of God, rejoicing in a good knowledge of the truth and many privileges of service. The contest is not yet over and, as Paul says: "Every man taking part in a contest exercises self-control in all things." Such a man has to 'browbeat his body and lead it as a slave, that, after having preached to others, he himself should not become disapproved somehow.' Paul cites the case of Israel and shows that the generation coming out of Egypt failed to hold its position before God, even after that mighty deliverance from Pharaoh's clutches. "On most of them God did not express his approval, for they were laid

7. What is the root cause of confusion in peoples' minds, and what therefore should our prayer be?

8. Luke 21:34 warns us of what pitfalls, and what is the remedy?

9. How do the Scriptures warn and advise respecting overconfidence?

low in the wilderness." After giving further evidence, Paul concludes: "Let him that thinks he has a firm position beware that he does not fall. . . . [God] will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it."—Luke 21:36; 1 Cor. 9:25-27; 10:5, 12, 13.

¹⁰ Note that last expression. God does not always "make the way out" by taking us away from the temptation; but by the help he provides through his Word and organization, and by his spirit, we are "able to endure it," so that it does not overwhelm us. Jesus' words appear to have a similar significance when he said: "You may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur." Surely he did not mean that we should ask to be taken away bodily from the scene of action, no more than Noah and his family were taken away from the scene of action, but were preserved right through the Flood itself, safely riding on top of it. What an experience! The things that are "destined to occur" are those things foretold in Scripture and which we have been discussing, the unexpected and shocking exposure and disgrace and mighty fall of Christendom, the exposure and failure of the United Nations, the "wild beast" that "goes off into destruction." Add to this the exposure and failure of every part of Satan's world, as Jesus said: "Heaven and earth will pass away." Finally, Satan himself will be seized and bound and hurled into the abyss.—Luke 21:36, 33; Rev. 17:3, 8, 11; 20:2, 3.

HOLD YOUR POSITION

¹¹ By Jehovah's undeserved kindness

10. (a) Shall we escape by being taken away from the scene of action? (b) What are the things "destined to occur"?

11. (a) What provision already made will help us hold our position? (b) How do those of the "great crowd" maintain their position?

through the Son of man we can escape all these things and hold our position before him. In contrast to heaven and earth passing away, Jesus said: "But my words will by no means pass away." We, too, if we hold fast to his words in faithful obedience, will by no means pass away. The dissolving of Satan's heaven and earth will not leave us stranded. Jehovah's "new heaven and a new earth" are already established, the latter part being represented in the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses. Besides the remaining ones of spiritual Israel, large numbers of that "great crowd" have obeyed the urgent command: "Get out of her [Babylon], my people," and have fled to God's city, Zion. They are not trusting in man's schemes or in their own works in order to win God's approval. The reason "why they are before the throne of God" is because they publicly confess and identify themselves as trusting in the provision God has kindly made for them. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Then they continue to maintain their position before the throne of God by "rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple," that is, in close union with the remnant of spiritual Israel, likened by Peter to "living stones [who] are being built up a spiritual house," or temple.—Luke 21:33; Rev. 21:1; 18:4; 7:14, 15; 1 Pet. 2:5.

¹² Reverting to the question as to whether Jesus' words at Luke 21:34-36 apply to all alike, or to some more than others, it is evident from what he said that all people everywhere are involved, "all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth." First, then, it logically follows that those who realize we are fast approaching "that day" of final reckoning have an obligation to sound the warning far and wide. As

12. What is our obligation toward all peoples, and in what does this result?

Jesus said, this must be done "for the purpose of a witness to all the nations," whether they accept the message or not. The Scriptures indicate that the nations as such, blinded by the "god of this system of things," will refuse to pay heed. Their blood will be upon their own heads. But, as also foretold and abundantly proved by the facts, there are many sheeplike ones who are recognizing the voice of the "right shepherd" in the Kingdom message being proclaimed world-wide and who are coming in their thousands to join the ranks of the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses.—Matt. 24:14; 2 Cor. 4:4; John 10:14-16.

¹³ While the Kingdom message must continue to be proclaimed to all people, we have a special obligation to help these many new ones who are coming to a knowledge of the truth. Very few of them previously had much knowledge of the Bible, if any at all. When opposition arises and they are confronted with various problems, they have no background of knowledge or experience to guide them and give them a balanced outlook. They need much help in every way in order to hold their position. Those in Jehovah's organization already in a position of responsibility, the "faithful and discreet slave" class referred to at Matthew 24:45-47, certainly appreciate this, and it would be true to say that the whole organization is geared to help these "young lambs," these "little sheep." But are these the only ones who particularly need help?—John 21:15-17.

¹⁴ It must be admitted that when Jesus said, "But pay attention to yourselves," he had in mind all his disciples living on earth at the time of the fulfillment of his words. From that point of view his words apply to all alike. There may be a tendency for the

servants in a congregation of Jehovah's witnesses to take for granted those who have been some years in the truth and active in the witness work and who are looked upon as being mature. They may be, but, as experience shows, surprisingly so at times, it is a sad mistake to conclude that these beloved brothers and sisters of ours are finding it comparatively easy to hold their position. By reason of their long standing they may not be so ready to tell of their difficulties, also because of not wanting to discourage those younger in the truth. But they are still in the flesh, still beset by limitations and certain tendencies that need to be curbed and that cause many a mental battle, though perhaps known only to themselves and quite unsuspected by others. A genuine interest and concern should therefore be shown toward everyone in the congregation. They should be visited, especially if for some reason they are not sharing in the meetings and activities of the congregation as they were previously doing. Remember that Satan is particularly wrathful "with the remaining ones of her [the woman's] seed, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus."—Rev. 12:17.

¹⁵ For the benefit and guidance of all seeking to hold their position we recall some of the fine expressions used by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews, where he seemed to have this theme very much in mind. After describing the superior position given by Jehovah to Christ Jesus, he warns of the need to "pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us, that we may never *drift away*." Then, after showing how a whole generation of Israelites in the wilderness lost their position before God and with whom he "became disgusted," he again warns us to

13. Why do those joining our ranks need much help, and how is this need met?

14. Why should none in the congregation be taken for granted?

15. How does Paul warn of the pitfalls to be guarded against?

beware lest we too should develop "a wicked heart lacking faith by *drawing away* from the living God." Later on, addressing those who had already "endured a great contest under sufferings," he makes the appeal: "Do not, therefore, *throw away* your freeness of speech, which has a great reward to be paid it." Then again, drawing on the experience of the Israelites, he advises of the sad result

"if we *turn away* from him who speaks from the heavens." Finally, after a grand word telling why Jesus Christ holds his position, because he "is the same yesterday and today, and forever," he warns: "Do not be *carried away* with various and strange teachings; for it is right for the heart to be given firmness by undeserved kindness." These are worthwhile expressions to keep in mind concerning things against which we should fortify ourselves. Do not gradually drift away or, through lack of faith, draw away from the living God or turn away from listening to him. Do not throw away your freeness of speech on behalf of the truth or get carried away with strange teachings contrary to the truth.—Heb. 2:1; 3:10-12; 10:32, 35; 12:25; 13:8, 9.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Respect for the Sanctity of Blood.
- Using Life in Harmony with the Will of God.
- Do You Keep Your Word?
- What Does the Bible Teach About the Divinity of Christ?
- Youths, Watch Your Conduct in This Delinquent World.

¹⁶ On the positive and constructive side Paul exhorts us who belong to the house over which the Son, Christ Jesus, is the head, to "make fast our hold on our freeness of speech and our exultation over the hope firm to the end," and to "make fast our hold on the confidence we had at the beginning firm to the end." After telling of the merciful provisions made through Jesus, the "great priest over the house

of God," he says: "Let us hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that promised." He is confident we are "not the kind that shrink back to destruction, but the kind that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul." Finally, after a fitting reminder that the kingdom which we serve is one which "cannot be shaken," he beautifully summarizes the essential attitude and course of action to be maintained if we are to hold our position before the Son of man, when he says: "Let us continue to have undeserved kindness, through which we may acceptably render God sacred service with godly fear and awe."—Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:21, 23, 39; 12:28.

16. What positive exhortation is given to help us hold our position?

MATTHEW, MARK OR JOHN?

It happens at times that a Bible society must make a choice as to which book of the Bible it will first translate into a new tongue. In such a case it might seem that of all sixty-six books of the Bible the Gospel of Matthew would be the first choice. But not so. Usually there is another consideration, that of convenience.

Thus Mark's Gospel is the first choice in most of such instances because of its simplicity and brevity. The Gospel of John, however, is the Bible book having the widest distribution, it being the most popular.

In this regard it may be observed that of the 1,165 languages into which the Bible is translated, 221 are of the complete Bible, 277 of the Christian Greek Scriptures, and the rest, 667, of one or more Bible books.

RELIGION

in 17th-Century England

LIKE the waves in a storm-tossed sea, ever changing, rushing to and fro, so the changing scene of seventeenth-century England presents a religious struggle never since equaled. Its swirling crosscurrents of opposite thought and action were marked by bitterness, persecution and bigotry.

Early in the reign of James I (1603-1625) the decision to produce a fresh translation of the Bible resulted in the Authorized Version of 1611, which soon became more popular than any other version. But though men might enjoy the Bible, toleration of varying beliefs outside the Church of England was limited. After the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, control was tightened still more. Under Charles I (1625-1649) the rigid measures of the fiery-tempered Archbishop Laud helped toward civil war, the ascendancy of Presbyterians and Independents and a direct challenge to the divine right of kings. More toleration was shown by Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth (1649-1660), although a clamp was put upon episcopacy. A reversal quickly set in with the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II (1660-1685) and a great wave of persecution of the Puritans broke out. James II (1685-1688) tried to restore Catholicism in such a systematic way that he lost his crown through the fears he fanned, and once more toleration appeared,



this time in greater measure than ever before.

Throughout this changing scene the Puritan played a key part. But what really was a Puritan? Writers define the name in various ways, some viewing a Puritan merely as a gloomy fanatic, some excluding Quakers and Presbyterians, but in the broadest sense it included all those driven into dissent, those not wishing to conform to the Anglican way. At first given in scorn, the Puritan soon came to be proud of his name.

PERSECUTION AND INTOLERANCE

We might have difficulty today in understanding life in the seventeenth century and how it could be possible for those calling themselves Christians to show such

bigotry and intolerance. But religion was like that then because they were not really Christian. "Humanity was no part of its special teaching. It must indeed be allowed that religion was then associated with the rack, the stake, the burning town, the massacre of women and children, the hate that never dies, the wrongs that can never be avenged."¹

Typical of this was the burning of Bartholomew Legatè at Smithfield, London, merely because he had rejected the trinity and told others of his views. Edward Wightman was the last man to be burned at the stake in England, in 1612, and this stirred up such resentment that the king decided that in the future it would be better to let heretics quietly waste away in prison. Among other instruments of persecution was the pillory, a wooden contraption in which the head and hands of the offender were fastened. Mainly at the instigation of Laud, three men, Prynne, Burton and Bastwick, were sentenced to a £5,000 (\$14,000) fine each and to life imprisonment for circulating attacks on the bishops. At the suggestion of the chief justice, Prynne was also to have the letters "S L," meaning seditious libeler, branded on both cheeks. Before a groaning crowd the hapless three were put in the pillory and had their ears sawed off. This was only one of the harsh sentences passed by the Court of Star Chamber. Its rival, the ecclesiastical Court of High Commission was also guilty of despotic cruelty, repeatedly causing men to be thrown into prison without warrant and without trial. Throughout the century trials were often mock affairs; false witnesses were called and the accused person was frequently not allowed to answer charges made against him, while few lawyers would risk undertaking his defense.

Acts of parliament were used as implements of persecution. The Corporation Act

of 1661 removed Puritan magistrates; the Conventicle Acts prohibited unorthodox religious gatherings. The Five Mile Act prevented ministers ejected from their livings from staying within five miles of any town, so driving them from their main audiences. Even being absent from the established church could bring heavy fines, and the fines of those unable to pay were added to the wealthier Puritans. One example of these staggering fines is recorded in 1673. Sir George Maxwell of Newark, Renfrewshire, was fined the following:

For each sabbath's absence from the parish church for three years	£31,200	\$87,360
For each sabbath's attendance at conventicles	62,400	174,720
For three "disorderly" baptisms	1,200	2,360
Total	£94,800	\$264,440 ²

In spite of this, many met in secret places, in barns, in malt kilns or oast houses and in the woods. Many were the raids made upon conventicles, and death on the spot was considered to be justified. Informers responsible for discovery were often men who came from the lowest levels of society, criminals and vagabonds, yet their tales were eagerly listened to. The comment of Archbishop Sancroft seeks to justify the use of such men: "After all, you can't build a ship without using crooked timber."³

Other punishments included selling offenders to colonies abroad. Tragedy struck one ship carrying more than two hundred covenanters to slavery in Barbados when a storm wrecked the vessel off the north of Scotland. The crew nailed the hatches down on them so that they could not escape by swimming to the shore, and most of them were drowned. Imprisonment was the more usual method, though, and at one time 12,000 Quakers as well as other dis-

senters crowded the filthy, disease-ridden quarters up and down the country. No wonder many considered it a judgment from God when first the plague and then the Great Fire of London swept through the metropolis in 1665 and 1666. Nonconformist preachers were not slow to fill the pulpits vacated by the clergy who fled from London in fear.

FIGHT FOR FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

The severe restrictions placed upon people's religious views led to a long hard fight for freedom. Both press and pulpit came under censure. The crown controlled all printing through the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London and enforced the printing ordinance by the Star Chamber. Every hole by which Puritan feeling could find vent was stopped up. A license was required to preach, and Laud drew up a list of all the clergy, marking those for preferment with the letter "O" (orthodox) and those needing a careful watch with the letter "P" (Puritan). Laud seemed bent on carrying out the threat King James had made against the Puritans that he would "harry them out of the land." Importation of Calvinist literature from the Continent was banned, and in 1628 men were even forbidden to discuss free will and predestination, one of the foremost controversies at the time. Comments one noted church historian on the conditions then: "The discipline of the Church was brought to bear upon every department of the life of a generation that was little fitted to receive it. It interfered with a man's management of his household, with his trade, with his amusements, as well as with his religious life and religious duties. What wonder if it became equally hateful to the immoral, to the careless, and to the precise?"⁴

In their fight for freedom many people came to blame the power of the bishops.

A petition with 15,000 signatures to it aimed at abolishing episcopacy so completely that it became known as the Root and Branch Petition. With the church on one side and the Presbyterians leading the other, parliament tried to conciliate both, but in the end failed to avert civil war.

Such restrictive practices and intolerant action prompted a vigorous growth of thought and literature. In their prison cells and behind the barred doors of their homes men turned over in their minds the problems they individually faced. They talked with friends and neighbors quietly and wondered. When a bold preacher voiced their thoughts they hailed him as their champion. So George Fox came to be known far and wide, and soon the body of Quakers that followed him won respect for their doctrine of free conscience, the guiding "inner light." The Quaker withstood all kinds of ridicule, standing unmoved in court while his hat was filled with water—by order of the justice—and clapped on his head, to the huge merriment of all present. For conscience' sake the Quaker would not remove it, even though streams of water ran down his neck and tickled his spine.

Though now remembered principally for his poetry, John Milton led the ranks of writers who poured out tracts and pamphlets for the Puritan cause. "Let truth and falsehood grapple. Who ever knew truth to be worsted in a free and open conflict?" was Milton's motto. But the greatest of all Puritan literature was undoubtedly John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Written in Bedford gaol, where he spent twelve years for refusing to conform his preaching to orthodox standards, the story of the Pilgrim was his own story, an experience of that age. Bunyan's greatest treasure was his Bible, and this was the book that provided so many with the strength to fight for freedom. So when, in

1960, a three-hundred-year-old Bible was discovered concealed in the wall of a cottage in Wrotham, Kent, it came as a forceful reminder of how men appreciated the Bible when faced with severe religious persecution.

THE PENDULUM OF RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES

The seventeenth century was notable for its degree of change. Matters went from one extreme to the other. Under Archbishop Laud only the Prayer Book could be used, but under Oliver Cromwell the Prayer Book was banned. Both sides expelled clergymen from their livings when they held the reins of power. In 1604 King James ejected about 300 clergy, who became known as the "silenced brethren." In 1643 it was the turn of the Anglican clergy when 2,000 of them lost their livings, a serious matter for families in those times. By 1662 the Anglican church was back in power and 2,000 nonconformists were deprived under the Act of Uniformity.

The declaration called the "Book of Sports" helps us to understand religious attitudes too. This allowed Sunday games if church service had been attended. Puritans opposed this vigorously despite a fine of twelve pence for each absence from church. Maidservants even refused to wash dishes on Sunday.

Then the tables were turned and the Puritans gained control. Parliament in 1647 abolished Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and saints' days. The reason for this shows how strong was the desire to return to true Christian teachings. Hugh Martin states it in these words: "We ought not to ignore the truth of the Puritan contention that many of the traditions of these festivals were pagan rather than Christian, even if we think it possible at times to learn even from the pagans. There is no warrant in Scripture for these days; they are not referred to in the apostolic Fathers, and

many early Christian writers such as Chrysostom, Socrates the historian and Origen are very critical of their observance. There is a good deal of evidence that many of the Christian festivals were deliberately superimposed upon pagan festivals."⁵

Changing attitudes were also reflected in the position of the communion table. Should its long side be north and south, or east and west? Laud insisted on the former or "altarwise" position. But with the fall of Laud the tables went back to their former position with great rejoicing. Revenge for Laud's actions manifested itself by the wrecking of many churches, or "steeple houses," as they were termed. At Norwich the cathedral was reduced to a ruin inside and the organ pipes, vestments, copes, surplices and service books were carried to the market place there to be set on fire while the crowds turned the cathedral into an alehouse.

The Presbyterians' brief term of power saw the introduction of the Solemn League and Covenant. In return for military assistance from Scotland, parliament agreed to reform religion in England and set up a Presbyterian form of church government. The famous Westminster Assembly convened to settle all details, but little was ever done in reality and Presbyterianism never gained much strength in England. Instead it was the Independents or nonconformists who, during Cromwell's time especially, built a foundation that was to last for centuries and insure their survival.

Oliver Cromwell is still one of the most controversial figures in English history. During his rule a more tolerant attitude toward religious differences prevailed. Cromwell felt that all his actions were governed by God, an attitude shared by large numbers of people in those days. This led to unfortunate statements at times. At the capture of Drogheda in

Ireland Cromwell ordered a most hideous massacre, justifying it by stating, "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches."⁶ Describing the battle of Dunbar, where Cromwell met the religious Scots, Winston Churchill observes with insight: "Both sides confidently appealed to Jehovah; and the Most High, finding so little to choose between them in faith and zeal, must have allowed purely military factors to prevail."⁷

With the restoration of the monarchy the Anglican church was again dominant and persecution of Puritans was renewed with vigor in many parts. But nonconformity was stronger now, more sure of its own ideas and aims. With the death of Charles II the pendulum swung rapidly the other way, as James placed Roman Catholics in office here, there and everywhere. In trying to win the dissenters for his own purposes he drove them toward the Anglican camp. His designs were too apparent and he fled to France when William of Orange was invited to land in England.

William would not agree to reign without freedom of worship. In 1689 the Toleration Act saw the end of much suffering for the sake of conscience in religious mat-

ters, though isolated examples, such as the massacre of Glencoe three years later, still revealed much hatred and bitterness.

Not once in the seventeenth century did the pendulum point to a really Christian course of action by government and people. It was an era characterized by fear, bigotry, persecution, corruption and favoritism. The mixture of church and state led to great restraint of liberty for many and the framing of one law after another to hobble the dissenter. Such a page from history can be a warning today; to follow that course would be to reject the apostle's sound counsel given nineteen centuries ago: "On the other hand, the fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law."—Gal. 5:22, 23.

REFERENCES

- 1 *England Under the Stuarts*, by G. M. Trevelyan, page 28.
- 2 *The Scottish Covenanters*, by J. Barr, page 98.
- 3 *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers*, by J. Besse, 1753, Volume I, page 460.
- 4 *The Church and the Puritans*, by H. O. Wakeman, page 133.
- 5 *Puritanism and Richard Baxter*, by H. Martin, page 111.
- 6 *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, by T. Carlyle, Letter 98, September 17, 1649.
- 7 *A History of the English-speaking Peoples*, by W. S. Churchill, Volume 2, page 235.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Have you read the recent issues of *The Watchtower* carefully? If so, you should recognize these important points. Check yourself.

● What is a career? So what must one do in the ministry if it is to be his career?

A career is a course of constant progressive achievement in a certain field or pursuit. For the ministry to be one's career, he must make it his primary occupation and continually make progress in it.—P. 261.*

● Why was it that Jesus never made a mis-

take, while Adam and Eve, who were also perfect, did err?

Jesus never made a mistake because he had strong love for Jehovah and always obeyed Him, and God's way is always right. Further, Jesus exercised his perceptive powers, considering the outcome of any course before pursuing it, and then chose the way that would glorify God. Adam and Eve failed on all these counts.—P. 264.

● Are the Ten Commandments any longer of concern to Christians?

Yes. While it is true that Christians are no

* All page references are to *The Watchtower* for 1961.

longer under the Mosaic law code, of which the Ten Commandments are part, the principles embodied in those commandments are ever valid and they have been recorded for our instruction.—P. 281.

- Does the Bible ever speak with approval of tradition?

Yes. At 2 Thessalonians 2:15 and 3:6 reference is made to valid tradition by the apostles, which tradition was committed to writing under inspiration. This, of course, is not the same as uninspired human tradition that conflicts with God's Word.—P. 287.

- Is it right to pray for joy? What else is required to obtain it?

Yes, it is right to pray for joy. Then, consistent with our prayer, we must cultivate joy by filling our minds with the truths from God's Word that are proper cause for happiness and tell others about them, so benefiting from the greater happiness of giving; regularly associate with God's New World society; look to Jehovah for guidance in all things and conduct ourselves in the way that he shows to be right; also make it a point to do things that contribute to the happiness of other persons.—P. 297.

- In what way should a Christian overseer give counsel?

Lovingly, in such a way as to upbuild and encourage, and at the same time giving practical aid in overcoming difficulties.—P. 303.

- From what district did nearly all the apostles of Jesus Christ come?

Galilee.—P. 309.

- What quality might cause one, for the sake of others, to refrain from drinking or eating certain things that are not disapproved by God?

Love.—P. 332.

- Why is it important for a Christian to have good manners?

They are an expression of loving consideration for others. They contribute to good relations with others. Others are inclined to look with more favor on the message borne by a well-mannered person and the organization of which he is a part.—Pp. 362, 367.

- What did the seventh-day Jewish sabbath foreshadow?

The millennial reign of Jesus Christ.—P. 380.

- What is the "sin that easily entangles," to which reference is made at Hebrews 12:1?

Lack of faith.—P. 401.

- Name three outstanding Biblical examples of traitors.

Ahithophel, Judas Iscariot. The "evil slave" class.—P. 407.

- Above all else, what purpose was served by the early Jewish synagogues?

They were schools, places of instruction, exhortation and encouragement.—P. 413.

- What is the holy spirit?

It is Jehovah's invisible active force; not just the power residing within himself, but his energy when projected out from himself for the accomplishing of his will.—P. 429.

- How can one keep from letting evil harden him?

By keeping in mind Scriptural examples of those who allowed evil to soften them. Praying to God and maintaining strong faith. Being humble, patient, long-suffering. Cultivating love. Keeping in mind why God permits evil: for the vindication of his name and the salvation of his creatures.—P. 444.

- Name a few suggestions that will help to make your Bible reading most beneficial.

Have the right mental attitude, looking humbly to Jehovah for instruction. Seek understanding, taking time for meditation and to look up explanations of portions not understood. Get the over-all view of what you read, perhaps even digging out background material. Give attention to prophetic fulfillment. Isolate principles that affect your own life and scriptures to use in the ministry. Visualize or mentally outline what you read.—Pp. 472, 475.

- What is one's conscience? Is it an infallible guide?

Conscience is that faculty of mind that tells us whether we are doing right or wrong. For the conscience to give proper guidance it must be trained by the Word of God.—Pp. 485-487.

- Is "saving face" compatible with Christian principles?

No; it endangers one's relationship with Jehovah God.—P. 496.

- What is "greediness," against which the Bible warns?

Extreme selfishness, an intense craving for more of something than is reasonable or needed or for what rightfully belongs to someone else. It manifests itself in love of money, extreme fondness for food and drink, honor and fame, power and sex.—P. 504.

Staying Awake as Approved Slaves

PHYSICAL sleep has its place. It is a wise provision of a loving Creator to restore one to freshness and vigor after a day of hard work. But there is never any good reason for spiritual sleep.

As we look about us we see the world sleeping on, spiritually asleep, oblivious to the threat of Armageddon, which is daily drawing nearer. As in the days of Noah, the world refuses to take heed. How thankful we can be that we belong to a class of people that is awake today, having been awakened by a group of whom it was long ago foretold: "Happy are those slaves whom the Master on arriving finds watching! Truly I say to you, He will gird himself and make them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them."—Luke 12:37.*

These slaves first began watching on the day of Pentecost and have continued faithfully down to our day. In modern times, by pinpointing 1914 as the end of the appointed times of the nations, they showed themselves to be awake at least as far back as 1877. And they continue to show themselves awake by preaching the good news of the Kingdom and by warning all to flee modern Babylon before it is too late.

How can we stay awake as approved slaves with this "faithful and discreet slave"?—Matt. 24:45-47.

First of all, by keeping up with the spiritual food provided by this slave, as published by its legal instrument, the Watch Tower Society. That requires both private Bible study and attendance at congregational meetings, where this spiritual food is dispensed.

Secondly, to keep thus awake we must follow theocratic principles and policies. Our own way may seem right in our own eyes, but let us not forget that it is not in man that walks to direct his own steps. How can it be when the human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked by reason of the sin of our first parents? So we want to look to God's channel not only for spiritual food but also for instructions as to how we may serve God effectively and harmoniously.

Third, to stay awake as approved slaves we need to remain in our assigned places. Even as each of the three hundred men with

Gideon "kept standing each one in his place all around the camp" of the Midianites, so must we serve in our respective places. Each one of us has his place, as a congregation publisher, pioneer, servant in the congregation, traveling representative of the Christian congregation or as a member of a Bethel family. Let us do our part faithfully as to Jehovah, content wherever he would have us serve as indicated by our circumstances and the directions coming to us from his channel. —Judg. 7:21.

A fourth way in which we can stay awake as approved slaves is by making financial contributions to the agencies Jehovah is using, both locally and world-wide. Just as we have benefited by the Bible literature and assemblies made possible by the contributions others made in times past, so our contributions will benefit still others who will yet hear of Jehovah and his purposes. And for the greatest possible blessing let each of us give according to what he has, doing so from the heart, cheerfully.—2 Cor. 8:12; 9:6, 7.

Manifesting loyalty to God's channel and one's brothers and showing love is a fifth way in which we can stay awake as approved slaves. There is so little loyalty in the world today, even as there is very little love. Loyalty makes for a strong organization, for unity. It furnishes a wall of protection against the attacks by Satan and his agents. As for love, is it not the outstanding quality of both Jehovah and his organization? Did not Jesus say that it would identify his followers? Surely!—John 13:34, 35.

And lastly, we can stay awake by being respectful and obedient to the organization, the Watch Tower Society and its appointed servants. Yes, "remember those who are governing you, . . . and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith." —Heb. 13:7.

So let us stay awake as approved slaves by co-operating with the "faithful and discreet slave" to the best of our ability. Let us stay awake to lead happy lives of inspiring purpose now. Doing God's will is indeed all-absorbing, fascinating, and it furnishes the greatest incentives: sharing in the vindication of Jehovah's name, bringing the message of life to others and gaining life ourselves.

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

"KEEP FROM BECOMING CAUSES FOR

Stumbling"

THE world's largest circus packed out Madison Square Garden in New York city. Now came the evening's most breath-taking act. Toward one side two bicycle riders are balancing themselves on a cable that stretches across the Garden high above the crowd. A pole reaches from one rider to the other, resting on their shoulders, and a chair rests on the pole, balanced on its rungs. A man steps out, sits upon the chair balanced on the pole and then a girl climbs upon his shoulders. The two bicycle riders now pedal out to the center of the Garden as several score men with a tightly stretched net move to keep directly under them. As they reach the center the man seated on the chair rises to stand on it and the girl raises herself to stand on his shoulders and then she waves to the crowd below, which keeps holding its breath, for the act is not yet over. Now the girl sits down on the man's shoulders, the man down on his chair, and the riders pedal back to the side, where one by one they leave the perilous cable and where chair, pole and bicycles are lifted off amid the thunderous applause of the crowd.

That breath-taking and spine-tingling performance required perfect balance and co-ordination on the part of all four performers. But suppose someone had accidentally struck the cable, causing one or the other to stumble, what would have happened to all four? True, there was a net below, but who knows how many injuries would have been sustained if the bicycles, chair, pole and all four perform-

ers had hurtled into the net at once? Would any circus hand carelessly have caused any stumbling? Surely not!

Today we are living in critical times hard to deal with. Keeping our spiritual balance might well be likened to what was required of those circus performers. With Satan having great rage because he knows his time is short, he is doing all he can to cause us to stumble, to become offended, to fall into sin and lose out on salvation. If ever the advice to "keep working out your own salvation with fear and trembling" was important, it is now. Since this is so, Christians must be oh so very careful, lest they serve the Devil's purpose by causing others to stumble, and so causing, not merely some physical injuries, but spiritual ones that could result in everlasting death.—Phil. 2:12.

It is so easy to stumble others. It can be done by what we say or how we say it, by what we do or how we do it, and it can even be done by our failing to speak when we should or failing to act when we should.

None of us may act independently, oblivious to the interests of our brothers or neighbors. We may not take the attitude of the murderer Cain, who hypocritically asked: "Am I my brother's guardian?" so betraying how hard he had let his heart become, that he had slain his brother with deliberate malice, and that he had not repented of his foul deed. Certainly that is the very opposite of the spirit that we as Christians want to have.—Gen. 4:9.

Yet, according to Jesus, if we are careless and cause others to stumble, we can expect the same fate as Cain: "The Son of man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness, and they will pitch them into the fiery furnace. There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be." "But whoever stumbles one of these little ones who put faith in me, it is more beneficial for him to have hung around his neck a millstone . . . and to be sunk in the wide, open sea." It is indeed a sobering thought that those causing stumbling will be classed with those doing lawlessness and that it would have been better for them first to have perished in the sea.—Matt. 13:41, 42; 18:6.

True, were all Christians fully mature, there would be no danger of stumbling another: "The inclination that is well supported you will safeguard in continuous peace." "Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law, and for them there is no stumbling block." But since not all Christians are strong in faith and mature, we must exercise care. The issue really is self-interest versus another's spiritual interests, or, which is more important, luxuries for ourselves or another's necessities? "All things are lawful; but not all things are advantageous. All things are lawful; but not all things build up. Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person."—Isa. 26:3; Ps. 119:165; 1 Cor. 10:23, 24.

In fact, Christians must exercise care lest they stumble "people on the outside." "Keep from becoming causes for stumbling to Jews as well as Greeks and to the congregation of God, even as I am pleasing all people in all things, not seeking my own advantage but that of the many, in order that they might get saved."—1 Tim. 3:7; 1 Cor. 10:32, 33.

BY THOUGHTLESS USE OF THE TONGUE

One of the commonest ways in which one might become a cause for stumbling is by the thoughtless use of that "unruly injurious thing," his tongue. "If any man seems to himself to be a formal worshiper and yet does not bridle his tongue, but goes on deceiving his own heart, this man's form of worship is futile." Why? Because he might stumble others by using vulgar, obscene or profane language or by saying things that he ought not. Wisely therefore we are counseled: "Let nothing go forth unrestrained from your mouth."—Jas. 3:8; 1:26; 1 Sam. 2:3.

Do you freely criticize? True, your remarks may be accurate, but is it really your prerogative to express criticism and do you do so in a kind manner and at the right time? Are you destructive, causing stumbling, or constructive, truly helpful and encouraging as well as enlightening?

Are you prone to gossip? Gossip is small talk and it might be argued that only immature ones would be stumbled by it; but it is the very immature ones that you must consider. Those in Paul's day who stumbled on account of meat certainly were immature, yet he said that he would never eat meat again if it caused his brother to stumble. So watch even your light, small talk.—1 Cor. 8:13.

Do you betray confidences? To the extent that others consider you mature, experienced, wise, dependable, to that extent they will be likely to take you into their confidence. To betray it reflects unreliability on your part and might easily stumble those looking to you for help.

Do you like to speculate regarding the meaning of certain scriptures or fulfillment of prophecies? To express private, personal opinions that seem plausible to you but for which you have little or no basis, can easily confuse the immature, causing them to stumble. Besides, it tends

to draw undue attention to yourself, and so might even cause you to stumble. Instead of seeking glory for yourself, honor God and look to his organization for instruction.

BY THOUGHTLESS CONDUCT

Especially as regards their personal conduct do dedicated Christians need to remember that not all things that are lawful build up. Today we may not have the problem of stumbling others by eating certain kinds of flesh, but let it be noted that Paul added, "or *do anything* over which your brother stumbles."—Rom. 14:21.

In certain states of the United States and in certain lands the use of alcoholic liquor is taboo. For a Christian to indulge in liquor in such places may easily stumble a person of good will. Even where it is lawful, frequenting a bar or tavern may have the same harmful effect. Or at a social gathering one may stop just short of drunkenness but still have imbibed enough to create an unfavorable impression. How much better to deny oneself a little and so leave a good impression on others!

You might attend certain moving picture shows or stage plays of questionable moral value and feel that they would not hurt you, but it might hurt others to see you going to such, wondering how you would allow yourself the liberty to do so. Or you might neglect a congregational meeting because you want to see a certain moving picture. You might reason that doing this just once would not harm you, but you might stumble those upon whom you urge regular attendance at Christian congregational meetings and the importance of them.

Then again, you might have an abundance of this world's goods and because of this manifest poor and careless stewardship of what is yours. True, it belongs

to you, but might not your unwise course stumble weaker ones who want to emulate you or who might wonder about the wisdom of your course?

Some, before they became dedicated servants of Jehovah, may have liked to hunt and fish for sport. Still enjoying the sport, they might indulge and salve their conscience because they eat what they catch, even though it might cost them several times as much as it would to buy it. This might easily stumble some who never did indulge in such sports. However, no objection can be raised against those who hunt and fish for the sake of food or to make a living.

Has prosperity caused you to develop a love for money? If so, then you will have to watch that you do not put your gaining of more wealth ahead of the interests of others, showing yourself more concerned with profits than with rendering good service and giving good value.

What about the proprieties between the sexes? One might feel self-confident and allow himself certain liberties or indiscretions, such as flirting with those who are married or engaged to marry. He may never get deeply involved emotionally, but he is playing at something to which he has no right, and he may fall into sin or cause others to stumble. So let all call to mind the advice: "Keep making straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather that it may be healed. Pursue peace with all people, . . . carefully watching that no one may be deprived of the undeserved kindness of God; that no poisonous root may spring up and cause trouble and many be defiled by it."—Heb. 12:13-15.

BY WHAT WE FAIL TO SAY AND DO

There are times when a Christian might stumble others by failing to speak when he should. For example, when encouragement

is needed, failure to manifest love by speaking up in an upbuilding way may cause disappointment and a feeling of failure.

Likewise, when a brother is sick or otherwise in need, do we come to his aid? Failure to do so may stumble him if he is immature. Do we neglect opportunities to be helpful in getting others to meetings or in the field ministry? Do we let the weather keep us from engaging in pure worship, that is, unnecessarily? Failure along any of these lines might well stumble the weak.

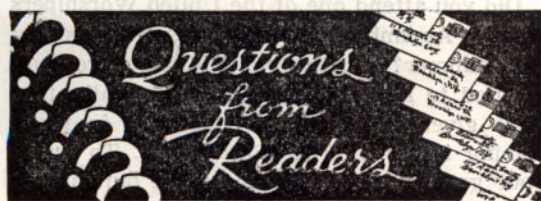
Do we have reason to think that we have offended another? Then we may not ignore it, arguing that Matthew 18:15, 16 requires him to come to us with his grievance. No, if he is immature, he might not feel equal to obeying that command and so we must go to him in obedience to the command at Matthew 5:23, 24: "If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and you there remember that your brother has something against you, . . . first make your peace with your brother, and then . . . offer up your gift." Failure to obey this command may well cause your brother to stumble.

Of course, in all these respects the servants in a congregation and particularly the overseers have added responsibilities to keep from becoming causes for stum-

bling. By reason of their greater knowledge, maturity and experience more is required of them, both by God and by their brothers, and also by reason of their position they can more easily stumble others. At the same time they must exercise oversight lest others cause stumbling. They must feel like the apostle Paul: "Who is stumbled, and I am not incensed?" They especially must keep an "eye on those who create divisions and causes for stumbling," lest harm come to the sheep entrusted to their care.—2 Cor. 11:29; Rom. 16:17.

What will help us to keep from being stumbled and from becoming causes for stumbling? Love. Love will make us long-suffering and obliging. It will keep us from being jealous, from bragging, from getting puffed up, from behaving indecently, from looking only to our own interests and from becoming provoked. It will help us to bear, believe, hope and endure all things. It never fails.—1 Cor. 13:4-8.

So in these perilous times let love keep all dedicated Christians from becoming causes for stumbling so that none cause another to lose out on eternal salvation, at the same time remembering that the mature Christian is not easily stumbled by what others say and do or fail to say and do.



• What is the wisdom referred to at Ecclesiastes 1:18?—M. L., United States.

Ecclesiastes 1:18 reads: "For in the abundance of wisdom there is an abundance of vexation, so that he that increases knowledge increases pain." The Scriptures show that there

are two kinds of wisdom, the godly kind and the worldly kind. Obviously this text does not refer to the godly kind, for of it we read: "Happy is the man that has found wisdom, and the man that gets discernment, for the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver and the produce of it even than gold. It is more precious than corals, and all other delights of yours cannot be made equal to it. Length of days is in its right hand; in its left hand there are riches and glory. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its roadways are peace. It is a tree of life to those taking hold of it, and those keeping fast hold of it are to be called happy."—Prov. 3:13-18.

This is the true wisdom, which rests upon the fear of Jehovah God and the acceptance of his provisions through Jesus Christ. It does not bring vexation. Furthermore, the increase of the knowledge of Jehovah God and of his Son, Jesus Christ, whom he sent, means everlasting life to all who will acquire such knowledge and use it according to godly wisdom.—John 17:3.

But the wisdom referred to at Ecclesiastes 1:18 is the wisdom of this world that recognizes no relationship to God and therefore brings with it an abundance of vexation. The worldly-wise person increases knowledge but uses that knowledge according to the wisdom of untheocratic men, and consequently he only increases pain for himself, as can be witnessed in the world today when there is more knowledge available in our libraries and schools and other institutions for gathering information than ever before and yet at the same time there has never been more pain on the part of mankind. Concerning this kind of wisdom the apostle Paul wrote: "For the wisdom of this

world is foolishness with God."—1 Cor. 3:19.

● Is it proper for one of Jehovah's witnesses to conduct a funeral for one who dies while disfellowshipped?—E. B., United States.

A congregation of Jehovah's servants should not hold the funeral service of one who dies while disfellowshipped; nor should a dedicated Christian officiate at such a funeral, regardless of the fact that the rest of the members of the family might be witnesses of Jehovah and in good standing. Neither should any of the congregation attend such a funeral. We never want to give the impression to outsiders that a disfellowshipped person was acceptable in the congregation when in truth and in fact he was not acceptable but had been disfellowshipped from it.

David expressed the right sentiments when he said that he did not even want to be associated with such persons at the time of death: "Do not take away my soul along with sinners, nor my life along with bloodguilty men."—Ps. 26:9.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

Devoted servants of God stay spiritually awake in these critical times. (Luke 12:37) They keep busy doing the work assigned them by God. In fulfilling their God-given commission, during September Jehovah's witnesses will be offering to all persons the latest Bible-study aids published by the Watch Tower Society.

ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the annual meeting of members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held at ten o'clock in the forenoon of Sunday, October 1, 1961, at the Society's office located at 4100 Bigelow Boulevard. The regular letters of notice will be sent to all the members, and in order to insure delivery of the letters all members should be certain that the secretary's office has their present addresses.

The proxies, which will accompany the notices of meeting, should be returned by the mem-

bers promptly, in order to reach the office of the secretary of the Society not later than September 15. Each member should return his proxy whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not.

MORE BENEFITS FROM UNITED WORSHIPERS ASSEMBLIES

Did you attend one of the United Worshipers District Assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses held this summer? Whether you did or not you will be glad to know that the principal talks that were given there will be published in forthcoming issues of *The Watchtower*. To insure your getting each issue and these outstanding talks of the convention, send for your year's subscription for *The Watchtower* at once. Send only \$1.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

October 1: Hold Your Position. Page 521.

October 8: Avoid the Pitfalls. Page 527.