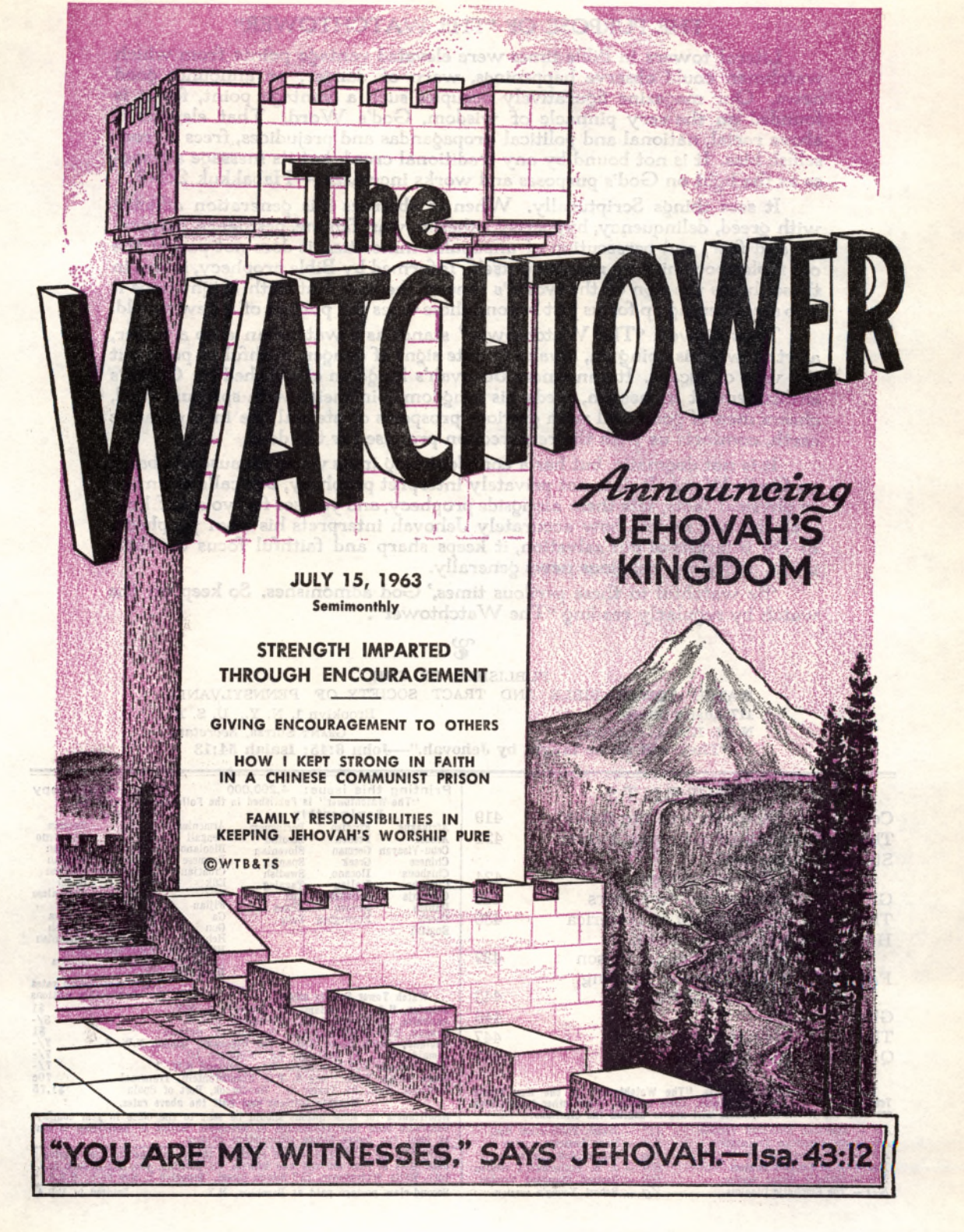




The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

JULY 15, 1963

Semimonthly

**STRENGTH IMPARTED
THROUGH ENCOURAGEMENT**

GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHERS

**HOW I KEPT STRONG IN FAITH
IN A CHINESE COMMUNIST PRISON**

**FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES IN
KEEPING JEHOVAH'S WORSHIP PURE**

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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".



PUBLISHED BY THE

WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

117 Adams Street

Brooklyn 1, N. Y., U. S. A.

N. H. KNORR, President

GRANT SUTTER, Secretary

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

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The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, 1961 edition. When other translations are used the following symbols will appear behind the citations:

AS - American Standard Version	JP - Jewish Publication Soc.
AT - An American Translation	Le - Isaac Leeser's version
AV - Authorized Version (1611)	Mo - James Moffatt's version
Da - J. N. Darby's version	Ro - J. B. Rotherham's version
Dy - Catholic Douay version	RS - Revised Standard Version
ED - The Emphatic Diaglott	Yg - Robert Young's version

Printing this issue: 4,200,000
"The Watchtower" is Published in the Following 66 Languages

Semimonthly	Monthly
Afrikaans	Armenian
Arabic	Bengali
Cebu-Visayan	Bicolano
Chinese	Burmese
Chishona	Croatian
Cibemba	Edik
Cinyanja	Italian
Danish	Japanese
Dutch	Korean
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	Malayalam
	Marathi
	Melanesian-
	Pidgin
	Motu
	Pampango
	Pangasinan
	Papamento
	Urdu
	Yoruba

Watch Tower Society offices

America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn 1, N.Y.	\$1
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W.	8/-
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto 19, Ontario	7/-
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London N.W. 7	7/-
Jamaica, W.I., 41 Trafalgar Rd., Kingston 10	7/-
New Zealand, 621 New North Rd., Auckland S.W. 1	7/-
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, Transvaal	7/-
Trinidad, W.I., 21 Taylor St., Woodbrook, Port of Spain	\$1.75

Monthly editions cost half the above rates.

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn. Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, 117 Adams Street, Brooklyn 1, New York, U.S.A.

Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y.

Printed in U.S.A.



Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

Vol. LXXXIV

July 15, 1963

Number 14

CONTENDING

"According to the Rules"

THIS life holds out many good and desirable things. And it is but natural that persons with health, strength and hope should look forward to gaining some of these. There is nothing wrong with the desire to get ahead, to succeed. For example, the apostle Paul clearly says that it is commendable to want to become an overseer in a Christian congregation: "If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work."—1 Tim. 3:1.

However, while there is nothing wrong with aspiring to a position of greater responsibility, trying to succeed in worthwhile matters, there is something decidedly wrong when one is so concerned with realizing his objectives that he rides roughshod over everyone in his way and violates the rules. For example, aspiring to the office of an overseer is a good thing, but it is dead wrong to scheme to gain that office by playing politics, by slanderizing another or plotting his downfall.

Needless to say, the world is full of people who are doing that very thing; that is why lawlessness abounds and the

love for God on the part of many has grown cold. When you really come down to it, all delinquency, all immorality, all crime, all the squabbles between nations and blocs of nations are because persons and nations refuse to contend according to the rules.—Matt. 24:12.

Rules are necessary for the peace and well-being of all concerned. Rules limit your freedom for the benefit of your neighbor, even as they limit the freedom of your neighbor for your benefit. In other words, for all to enjoy freedom each one's freedom must be relative. So it at once becomes apparent that this matter of contending according to the rules applies to all our relations with our fellowman and, chief of all, in our relations with our Creator, the Maker of the rules.

Going by the rules is therefore the right thing to do. Only by so doing can we have a clear conscience, which is not an insignificant item. Every time you resist the temptation to violate the rules, to circumvent them for some personal advantage, large or small, you get a reward in moral strength, in satisfaction, in increased self-respect, and that is certainly worth it.—1 Tim. 1:19.

Further, contending according to the rules is the only fair thing to do in your relations with your fellowman or neigh-

bor. You want others to be just in dealing with you, so you should be just in dealing with them. You do not want others to take unfair advantage of you, so you should not want to take unfair advantage of them: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—Luke 6:31.

Going by the rules is also the wise way, for in the long run it is true that "crime does not pay." At the moment, one may appear to succeed in wrongdoing, but "there is nothing . . . carefully concealed that will never become known and never come into the open." As the apostle Paul noted in advising his fellow Christian Timothy: "If anyone contends even in the games, he is not crowned unless he has contended according to the rules."—Luke 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:5.

Due to inherited selfishness, "the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up," so we need to be on guard and fortify ourselves so as to be always contending according to the rules. (Gen. 8:21) One of the greatest aids is faith and trust in Jehovah. Trust God that you will have your daily bread, that he will not forsake you when you refuse to stoop to dishonest practices. "Jehovah himself will not hold back anything good from those walking in faultlessness."—Ps. 84:11.

Another great aid is appreciation. While setting your sights on a goal ahead or working for the attainment of a desirable possession, do not undervalue the blessings you do have. Do not be like wicked Ahab, who, although king of Israel, was miserable because he had set his heart upon another man's vineyard. The little he did not have meant more to him than the much he did have. The only way he could get that vineyard was by murdering its owner, and this was done. But at what a price! A terrible judgment of death came

upon both himself and his wicked wife, whose advice he followed.—1 Ki. 21:1-26.

Another great aid for all who would contend according to the rules is modesty. Do not aim too high, do not be greedy for much wealth or many possessions and you will be less likely to be tempted to violate the rules, to do wrong to realize your goals. Not without good reason does Jehovah command: "Be modest in walking with your God." And well does the wise maker of proverbs note that "wisdom is with the modest ones." The king of Israel was counseled not to "increase silver and gold for himself very much." And the apostle Paul warns that "those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin."—Mic. 6:8; Prov. 11:2; Deut. 17:17; 1 Tim. 6:9.

The greatest aid of all is love, love of God and for one's neighbor. (Mark 12:29-31) Love of God will make you want to please him and fear to displease him and so will help you to contend according to the rules, even though it may seem that you could get away with violating them as far as man is concerned. Love of neighbor will keep you from violating the rules to his harm, for "love does not work evil to one's neighbor."—Rom. 13:10.

This old world is in the mess it is politically, religiously, economically and socially because it is filled with and run by persons who are not concerned with contending according to the rules. But contending according to the rules is the wise thing, the right thing to do. Faith in God, appreciation of your blessings, modesty and love will help you to contend according to the rules, to your own happiness and well-being.

THE FORGIVENESS

OF A

Loving Father

WHO is the person that is so righteous that he has no need of forgiveness? Actually there is not one, for "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." It is the wise person, therefore, that recognizes his need of forgiveness, and, in harmony with the instructions of the Lord Jesus, humbly prays to God: "Forgive us our sins."—Rom. 3:23; Luke 11:4.

But will God hear the confessions of the repentant sinner who is truly sorry for his wrongdoing and desires with all his heart to do what is right? Indeed, he will! David, a man well acquainted with the forgiveness of God, sang: "For you, O Jehovah, are good and ready to forgive; and the loving-kindness to all those calling upon you is abundant." Years later an assembly of Levites acknowledged: "You are a God of acts of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness."—Ps. 86:5; Neh. 9:17; Dan. 9:9.

God's wonderful disposition to forgive is an invitation to all those who may have strayed into sinful ways. So do not feel that you are beyond recovery, that your *sins* disqualify you from God's mercy. Take courage in Jehovah's large capacity to forgive. Accept the invitation: "Let the wicked man leave his way, and the harmful man his thoughts; and let him return to Jehovah, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will forgive in a large way."—Isa. 55:7.

While he was on the earth Jesus magnified this large capacity of his Father to forgive. Especially did he do so on the occasion when the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees ridiculed him, saying: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Jesus responded by giving a series of illustrations in which he vindicated his welcoming of tax collectors and sinners by showing that such ones who repented became beloved by God.—Luke 15:2.

Who today is in need
of God's forgiveness?
How can it be obtained?

THE LOST SHEEP AND THE DRACHMA COIN

First, he asked which one of those Pharisees would not go searching if one out

of his flock of a hundred sheep got lost. He explained that just as there would be great joy on finding that one lost sheep, so there is more joy in heaven over just one sinner that repents than over ninety-nine self-righteous persons who feel no need of repentance. Yes, those that recognize themselves as sinners and who desire to correct their ways make the hearts of God's heavenly family rejoice.—Luke 15:3-7.

To further illustrate the point, Jesus asked: "What woman with ten drachma coins, if she loses one drachma coin, does not light a lamp and sweep her house and search carefully until she finds it?" He explained that, just as her joy is great on finding this one coin, so great joy arises among God's heavenly family when just one humble sinner repents and takes up His service.—Luke 15:8-10.

THE PRODIGAL SON

Finally, to magnify the loving forgiveness of his heavenly Father in terms that would touch the heart even more deeply and encourage one to serve God, Jesus told the illustration of the prodigal son. It has been rated as the finest short story ever told by a man.

"A certain man had two sons," Jesus began. "And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the part of the property that falls to my share.' Then he divided his means of living to them. Later, after not many days, the younger son gathered all things together and traveled abroad into a distant country, and there squandered his property by living a debauched life. When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he started to be in need. He even went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to herd swine. And he used to desire to be filled with the carob pods which the swine were eating, and no one would give him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many hired men of my father are abounding with bread, while I am perishing here from famine! I will rise and journey to my father and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men.''" So he rose and went to his father. While he was yet a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and fell upon his neck and tenderly kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son.



Make me as one of your hired men.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quick! bring out a robe, the best one, and clothe him with it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fattened young bull, slaughter it and let us eat and enjoy ourselves, because this my son was dead but has come to life again; he was lost but has been found.' And they started to enjoy themselves.

"Now his older son was in the field; and as he came and got near the house he heard a music concert and dancing. So he called one of the servants to him and inquired what these things meant. He said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father slaughtered the fattened young bull, because he got him back in good health.' But he became wrathful and was unwilling to go in. Then his father came out and began to entreat him. In reply he said to his father, 'Here it is so many years I have slaved for you and never once did I transgress your commandment, and yet to me you never once gave a kid for me to enjoy myself with my friends. But as soon as this your son who ate up your means of living with harlots arrived, you slaughtered the fattened young bull for him.' Then he said to him, 'Child, you have always been with me, and all the things that are mine are yours; but we just had to enjoy ourselves and rejoice, because this your brother was dead but has become alive, and he was lost but has been found.'"—Luke 15:11-32.

THE FORGIVING FATHER

How beautifully Jesus described the forgiving disposition of his heavenly Father! To think that the great Creator of the universe would accept a repentant sinner

in such a sympathetic, tender manner! Yet Jesus, who knew the Father best, showed by this touching illustration that that is exactly how the Father treats those who have a change of heart and come "home" to serve him.

But this conception of God as a Father who is ready to forgive was not new. Long before, Jehovah himself had explained that he dwelt with lowly ones who felt crushed because of their own sinfulness. He said: "In the height and in the holy place is where I reside, also with the one crushed and lowly in spirit."—Isa. 57:15.

OBTAINING THE FATHER'S FORGIVENESS

After being jolted to his senses, this was how the prodigal son felt—"crushed and lowly in spirit." He was truly sorry for his foolish conduct and felt unworthy even to be called a son of his father. So with a repentant, lowly spirit he returned to volunteer as his father's slave.

Similarly, there were many in the first century from among God's people of Israel that had forsaken their heavenly Father and were pursuing a wicked course. However, when they heard the Kingdom message preached by John the Baptist and Jesus it shocked them to their senses. They felt sorry for their sinful ways, and, like the prodigal son, they returned to volunteer as slaves of God. Because of their lowly spirit and genuine repentance Jesus warmly welcomed them, even as he illustrated that his heavenly Father had done in a spiritual way. They became Jesus' disciples and were sent out by him to preach concerning the kingdom of God.

Circumstances are similar today during Christ's second presence. Prior to 1931 in particular some persons became acquainted

with the truths of God's Word and associated closely with the anointed remnant of Christ's brothers. But instead of remaining to serve the heavenly Father, they, like the prodigal son, desired to enjoy the pleasures that the present system of things offered. They were not willing to wait to receive the blessings of the Kingdom rule, but wanted material blessings immediately.

In time, however, these modern counterparts of the prodigal son became famished due to the spiritual famine that struck Christendom. They had a change of heart. So, humbling themselves, they returned, confessed their sins and volunteered as slaves of God. Were they accepted? Indeed they were! Just as the loving father tenderly received his prodigal son and honored him with a feast, so these repentant ones of the Lord's "other sheep" have been honored with a spiritual feast of fat things and many privileges of service. They too have become active preachers of the kingdom of God. How loving and merciful the Father is toward those that recognize their need of forgiveness and return to him!

Since all have sinned, all can benefit from the humility and contriteness of heart demonstrated by the prodigal son. Not only did he feel sorry for his sins, but he proved his repentance by confessing his wrongdoing and requesting to be allowed to serve his father. If you want the favor and forgiveness of the heavenly Father you must do the same. Do not hold back! Do not let a feeling of unworthiness prevent you from turning to God to serve Him. Take courage, for Jehovah is "good and ready to forgive; and the loving-kindness to all those calling upon [him] is abundant."—Ps. 86:5.



STRENGTH

Imparted Through **ENCOURAGEMENT**

"We ... have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before us."
—HEB. 6:18.

HOW important encouragement is in time of stress! When our own weaknesses make us despondent, how much we appreciate a word of appreciation or an expression that gives hope! It is refreshing. It eases the burden of work and enables us to meet our problems with greater confidence. It imparts to us the strength we need to face the future. It imbues us with courage to hold firm under severe pressure. The Word of God particularly emphasizes the benefit of encouragement. Thus when the apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome, he said: "I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you in order for you to be made firm; or, rather, that there may be an interchange of encouragement among you, by each one through the other's faith, both yours and mine." (Rom. 1:11, 12) He knew that his Christian brothers in Rome, troubled by their own weaknesses and surrounded as they were by a world filled with all kinds of unrighteousness, needed encouragement, and he was anxious to give it to them personally. He also appreciated that the benefits would not be one-sided, for the giving of encouragement results in mutual upbuilding;

yes, there is an "interchange of encouragement."

²The kind of upbuilding that Paul wished for the believers in Rome does not result from flattery, which the unprincipled old world often confuses with encouragement. Flattery is false, insincere or excessive praise. Falsehood and insincerity do not impart strength; they do not build up. More often they simply result in contempt for the one who flatters. As Paul had earlier written to the Thesalonians: "At no time have we turned up either with flattering speech, (just as you know) or with a false front for covetousness." (1 Thess. 2:5) Confidence that is built on falsehood is a delusion, and hope that is not founded in truth leads only to disappointment. So when the leaders of nations lie to their people to hold their support in times of national crisis, there is no real upbuilding or imparting of strength. Likewise, when the religious clergy lie about the condition of the dead to those who have been bereaved, the comfort given is shallow and ineffectual. There is no real encouragement there. To give encouragement that imparts strength you must speak the truth. (Ps. 146:4; Eccl.

1. What effect does encouragement have on the one who receives it, and how did the apostle Paul indicate his appreciation of its importance?

2. What is the difference between encouragement and flattery, and what is the best source of encouragement?

9:5; John 5:28, 29) Speaking the Word of God to those grieved over the failures of this corrupt world as well as their own shortcomings is by far the best way to inspire others with courage and to give them a sustaining hope.

GOD PROVIDES THE PATTERN

³ Jehovah God himself has taken the lead in giving encouragement. Immediately after Adam had plunged humankind into sin, God announced that he would raise up a deliverer, and in so doing he provided a basis for hope for Adam's then unborn offspring. He did not forget that promise, but emphasized and amplified it in pronouncements to his servants in the generations that followed. Concerning his promise made to Abraham it is stated: "In this manner God, when he purposed to demonstrate more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of his counsel, stepped in with an oath, in order that, through two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to the refuge may have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm." (Heb. 6:17-19) Yes, by providing a sound basis for hope God encourages his servants, he builds their confidence, he makes it possible for them to face the future without fear. His unfailing promises recorded in the Bible are an unlimited source of strength for those of us living right now in this twentieth century. "For all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope."—Rom. 15:4.

⁴ With this God-given hope goes responsibility. Those who bear the name of

God must be his witnesses, making known to others his name and purposes. They must order their lives in harmony with his will. But God does not make their service a burden, driving them beyond their capacity. He lovingly cares for them, as a shepherd would his sheep. "Like a shepherd he will shepherd his own drove. With his arm he will collect together the lambs; and in his bosom he will carry them. Those giving suck he will conduct with care." (Isa. 40:11) God does not rob us of joy by requiring too much. Nor does he reject us simply because we may stumble. "As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Ps. 103:13, 14) He is merciful, loving and compassionate, and his forgiveness gives us courage to press on.

⁵ It calls for strong faith to persevere in the service of God, but Jehovah has made every provision to strengthen our faith. In addition to his matchless promises, he has surrounded us with men of faith whose example infuses us with courage and renewed vigor for the race that is set before us. There were Abel and Samson, who laid down their lives in Jehovah's service; Noah, who maintained integrity though surrounded by an ungodly world; Moses, who forsook all the riches of Egypt for the service of the true God; the Israelites who trusted that Jehovah would deliver them from the military pursuit forces of Pharaoh; and David, who fearlessly faced the Philistine giant Goliath in the name of Jehovah. "So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief

3. In what way has God taken the lead in giving encouragement, and how does this affect us?

4. What responsibility rests on those who accept the hope that God gives, but why is this not burdensome?

5. When we consider the accounts of men of faith recorded in the Scriptures, how does it make us react?

Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus.”
—Heb. 12:1, 2.

⁶ When we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, what do we see? Again, cause to take courage! For in Jesus we have a God-given model. In him we have a living example of the course that we should follow. Every step that we take in the footsteps of that One is a source of satisfaction and joy; it is refreshing! As Jesus himself said: “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. 11:28-30.

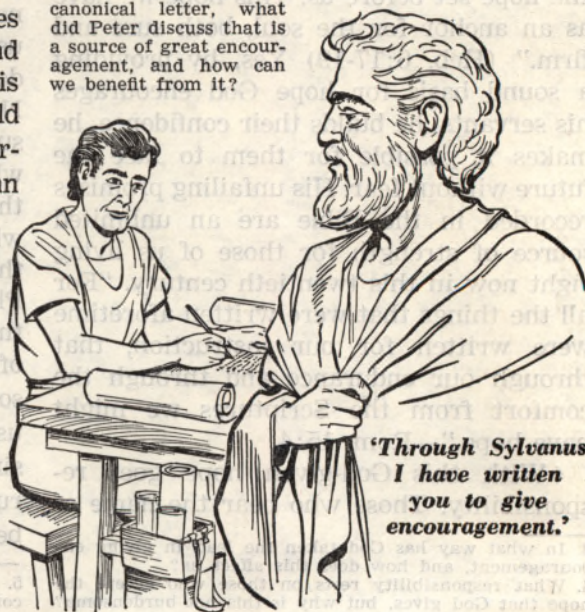
⁷ It is true that following in the footsteps of Jesus brings persecution from the old world. “In fact, all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted.” (2 Tim. 3:12) Jesus himself warned of this, saying: “A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” But even this does not cause the Christian witnesses of Jehovah to lose heart. They call to mind the words of Jesus on the night before his own death when he said: “In the world you will have tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world.” (John 15:20; 16:33) The apostles did take courage. They did not quit. True, Peter faltered, denying the Lord, but he repented. As Jesus had told him: “I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out; and you, when once you have returned, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:32) Peter did

just that. His faithful ministry was a source of strength to his Christian brothers; the things that he told them were up-building; and he wrote words of encouragement. “I have written you in few words,” said Peter, “to give encouragement and an earnest witness that this is the true undeserved kindness of God; in which stand firm.” (1 Pet. 5:12) He did not want any to forsake God’s organization and to turn aside to false teachings, but he knew that they were constantly under pressure from the world. So he wrote in his first canonical letter to encourage them, to strengthen their conviction that they had the true faith.

A LETTER OF ENCOURAGEMENT

⁸ Just what did Peter say by way of encouragement to his fellow Christians, so setting an example for us in encouraging one another? He was well aware of the fact that the source of greatest strength to him was his God-given hope, so he wrote about that hope, knowing that it would do the most good for his Christian

8. In writing his first canonical letter, what did Peter discuss that is a source of great encouragement, and how can we benefit from it?



**“Through Sylvanus
I have written
you to give
encouragement.”**

6. How does the example of the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith affect us?

7. (a) Why must true Christians face persecution, but why is there reason to take courage? (b) How did Peter carry out Jesus’ counsel to ‘strengthen his brothers’?

brothers if he could stir up greater appreciation for it on their part. He emphasized that theirs was a "living hope," something dependable, an expectation that would not lead to disappointment. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for according to his great mercy he gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance. It is reserved in the heavens for you, who are being safeguarded by God's power through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last period of time." This hope was a cause for great rejoicing and unspeakable joy among them. It was something of which the prophets had been moved by God's spirit to speak; it was a matter into which even the angels desired to peer. But God had given it to Christian men and women. How grateful they should be! How this should strengthen and uphold them! (1 Pet. 1:3-5, 8-12) Even to this day it is true that, whether one has been called to heavenly life as one of the 144,000 members of Christ's "little flock" or hopes to be among the 'upright ones who will reside in the earth,' he finds the greatest encouragement in fixing his mind on the promises of God, studying them in the Bible, meditating on them, discussing them with his Christian brothers and advocating them to others.—Luke 12:32; Prov. 2:21.

⁹ So great is the strength imparted by this dependable hope that the Christian is able to rejoice and stand firm in the face of severe trials that test his faith. Thus Peter went on to say: "In this fact you are greatly rejoicing, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been grieved by various trials, in order that the tested quality of your faith, of much greater value than gold that perishes

despite its being proved by fire, may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

(1 Pet. 1:6, 7) Paul, too, coupled the hope ahead with the matter of endurance when he said: "Rejoice in the hope ahead. Endure under tribulation." And in Jesus' case we find exemplified the remarkable strength that God-given hope imparts, as we read: "For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Those who closely consider the example of Christ do not get tired and give out; they do not quit.—Rom. 12:12; Heb. 12:2, 3; 1 Pet. 4:13, 14.

¹⁰ There is vital work for every Christian to do. So through Peter's first letter we are encouraged, yes, we are urged to 'brace up our minds for activity,' and we are under obligation to offer like encouragement to one another. The work of Christ's anointed body members is likened to that of the priests who served in Jerusalem's temple, for they themselves "are being built up a spiritual house for the purpose of a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." They do not offer up animal sacrifices, but spiritual sacrifices, a "sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name." (1 Pet. 1:13; 2:4-9; Heb. 13:15) They proclaim the loving purposes of Jehovah God, who has called them out of the spiritual darkness of the world into the marvelous light of his truth. For such service spiritual strength is vital.

¹¹ Having the truth of God's Word to light their path and to strengthen them, they do not share the world's fears; they

9. How does the Christian hope affect one's ability to face persecution?

10. For what activity did Peter admonish Christians to brace up their minds, and in this connection what should we do for one another?

11. With God's Word to guide us, how do we view the world's causes for fear, so what are we called on to do?

do not suffer agitation over its crises. They heed the command: "The object of their fear do not you fear, neither become agitated. But sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Pet. 3:14, 15) Because of the position they take, they are constantly called on to explain why they do not share the world's concern and why they do not devote themselves to the perpetuation of the institutions of the world, as others do. They have to explain why it is that they are no part of the world. In the eyes of worldly men their position may seem to be morally wrong, so they must make a defense, not in irritation, but with a mild temper and deep respect. They make clear that they rest their hope in God and his Son, and that they must obey God as ruler rather than men. As persons dedicated to God, they point out, it would be wrong for them to seek friendship with the world, because this would make them enemies of God. It takes courage to maintain such a stand amid a hostile world.—1 Pet. 1:20, 21; John 15:19; Jas. 4:4.

¹² Now these anointed witnesses have joined with them a great crowd of others, dedicated persons who serve in association with the temple class, who are a source of great encouragement to them and who share with them in fulfilling Jesus' command: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19, 20; Rev. 7:9, 10) This is a big task, an urgent one, and it calls for united effort. To this end Peter urges Christians to have "intense love for one another" and to build one

another up by "ministering to one another." They must work together. Even Jesus says: "Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." What wonderful encouragement!—1 Pet. 4:8-11.

¹³ In view of the corrupt condition of the world, Peter also found it necessary to give encouragement along other lines. It was not encouragement that took the form of commendation; nor was he speaking of matters that were designed to fill them with hope. Rather, this encouragement took the form of exhortation to avoid wrong conduct. "Beloved, I exhort you as aliens and temporary residents to keep abstaining from fleshly desires, which are the very ones that carry on a conflict against the soul." "For the time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches, and illegal idolatries." Counsel such as that is good for all of us. In view of the fact that we constantly rub elbows with a degraded world, it helps us to keep clearly in mind what is right and what is wrong. It protects us from adopting the world's twisted thinking and strengthens our righteous hatred of ungodly practices. It helps us to keep clearly in mind what these "fleshly desires" are—not things to be sought after, but enemies that carry on a conflict against the soul, and which, if we let them, will insinuate themselves into our lives and result in the destruction of our life, our soul. We need encouragement such as that, and Jehovah provides it for his modern-day worshipers even as he did for the early Christians through the apostles.—1 Pet. 2:11, 12, 16; 4:3-5.

12. (a) Who have joined with the anointed remnant in their preaching and teaching work, and with what effect? (b) How does Peter show that Christians can strengthen one another as they share in the ministry?

13. What other kind of encouragement did the apostle Peter include in his letter, what did he say, and how does it strengthen us?

¹⁴ In his letter of encouragement Peter also gave consideration to some of the discouraging domestic and employment problems confronting the brothers and affecting their worship. For example, some of them were suffering because of harsh masters, and much of the abuse was apparently because certain ones who were slaves owned by masters desired to do the will of God. They were suffering because of their "conscience toward God," even as many today are discriminated against by their secular employers because of their Christian faith. How should they view their situation? "If, when you are doing good and you suffer, you endure it, this is a thing agreeable with God," Peter wrote. And he went on to compare their situation with that of Christ himself, saying: "In fact, to this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely. He committed no sin, nor was deception found in his mouth. When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he did not go threatening, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously." How encouraging to have a pattern like that to follow!—1 Pet. 2:18-23.

¹⁵ This same fine example of subjection was recommended for Christian wives, even for those who were married to unbelieving husbands, because in starting out his counsel to wives, Peter uses the expression "in like manner," so directing their attention to the preceding statements regarding subjection. They too have a model in Christ, and he is just as much a model to them now as he was in the

first century. Encouraging them as to the outcome of their patient endurance, Peter counsels: "Be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eye-witnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect." Husbands, too, have their problems and find themselves in need of encouragement. So Peter, himself a married man and moved by Jehovah's spirit, discussed what confronted them and urged the men to try to be understanding in dealing with their wives, to recognize that the wife is "a weaker vessel, the feminine one," and so they should not expect her to react emotionally as a man or to do her work in the same way that a man would. The really important thing on which both husband and wife need to keep their minds fixed is their relationship with God, and never should they allow domestic problems to becloud their earnest desire to help each other to lay hold of the prize of eternal life. What practical encouragement! How helpful it was for all to have their difficult problems discussed, to have pointed out to them the Christian principles that should guide them, and to see highlighted the good that was being accomplished by their faithfulness under difficult circumstances! This same inspired letter is a source of strength to us in these trialsome days.—1 Pet. 3:1-9.

¹⁶ Overseers were not overlooked in Peter's letter, as if they needed no encouragement. To the contrary, he discussed with them matters that they would particularly appreciate: proper view of their ministry, their relationship to God and to the brothers, handling of difficult problems, and persecution. "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, . . . those who are

14. What strengthening comments were offered for the benefit of those serving in the employ of oppressive masters, and how does this counsel benefit many even in this day?

15. (a) To what was the attention of Christian wives directed as a source of encouragement? (b) What advice was given to husbands to encourage them? (c) On what must both husband and wife fix their minds if they are to strengthen and help each other?

16. In First Peter chapter 5 what matters were discussed with overseers, and why?

God's inheritance," he said. What overseer, even now, is not deeply moved when he stops to remind himself that those in the congregation of which he has oversight are persons who belong to God? Viewing the matter in this way, the overseer does not 'lord it over the flock' or become proud, but he heeds the advice: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; while you throw all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you." It is, indeed, a source of encouragement to a humble overseer to realize that he does not have to carry the whole load by himself. He is urged to look to God for guidance in handling problems, throwing all his anxieties on God, checking His Word for guidance and seeking Him in prayer. Nor does he stand alone when confronted with persecution from Satan's world; as Peter said: "The same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the

world. But, after you have suffered a little while, the God of all undeserved kindness, who called you to his everlasting glory in union with Christ, will himself finish your training, he will make you firm, he will make you strong." (1 Pet. 5:1-10) Overseers have good reason to take courage.

¹⁷ Without question, Jehovah himself is the Giver of strength to his people. He is the One who inspired the writing of these words of encouragement that we have considered. The promises contained in his own Word, the Bible, are what fill us with hope. He has instructed us so that we can meet the problems of life with success. With him to back us up, we can stand firm even in the face of world opposition. So with David we say: "Jehovah is my strength and my shield. In him my heart has trusted, and I have been helped, so that my heart exults, and with my song I shall laud him. Jehovah is a strength to his people."—Ps. 28:7, 8.

17. So who really is the great Giver of strength, and why so?

Giving

ENCOURAGEMENT

to Others

EVERYONE has opportunities to give encouragement to others, and how much it is appreciated when he uses those opportunities to good advantage! More than anyone else Jehovah is a Giver of encouragement; he forgives our shortcomings, builds up our hope, and strength-

1. Why is the giving of encouragement to others a Christian obligation, and what fine examples do we have in this?

ens us for the trials and work that lie before us. His Son Jesus Christ likewise proved to be an encourager of those who had good hearts, showing compassion for

the sick and afflicted, setting the example for his disciples by working right along with them in preaching the good news, yes, even laying down his life on their behalf. (John 15:13) The apostles too appreciated that the carrying out of their commission called, not only for efficiency to get the preaching work done, but also for loving encouragement to their fellow workers, and this they provided by upbuilding letters, personal visits and inspiring discourses to the congregations. (1 Pet. 5:12; Heb. 13:22; Acts 11:23; 20:2) What fine examples for us to follow! And follow them we must, for the Scriptures urge us to become imitators of God, to walk in the footsteps of his Son, and to imitate the apostles as they imitated Christ. So, it follows that we are under obligation to encourage one another.—Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 Cor. 11:1.

² Yet in the world around us men are prone to tear one another apart, to condemn the policies and practices of others simply to get prominence for themselves. They push the other fellow down so that he will not be competition for them. Too often there are no words of commendation for workers even when they do well; but let them make a mistake, and they are promptly called on the carpet. Housewives, too, become downhearted when their husbands take them for granted. Such a spirit, whether at home or in the business world, robs people of any pleasure they might have had in their work, leaving them discouraged, dejected and lonely. As a result, it is reported, more than ten thousand persons throughout the world commit suicide every day. What a shameful and selfish way to treat one's fellowman, whether done deliberately or simply through indif-

ference! What is wrong? What is lacking? Encouragement, yes; but why? Because the giving of encouragement is founded on love, and this is a loveless world. It was long ago foretold of these last days in which we live that men would be "lovers of themselves," but that in their relations with others they would be "unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection." —2 Tim. 3:1-3.

THINK IN TERMS OF GIVING

³ It is obvious that not everyone with whom we come in contact will be encouraging. Some are going to be so concerned about themselves that they fail to see the opportunities to show kindness; others have no compunction about causing distress to others. If they are inconsiderate of us, should we make ourselves over into their unloving image? How foolish that would be! Not selfish men, but Christ is the model to follow. When he was being mistreated, he did not go mistreating in return. Even when his own disciples, those he had taught and encouraged, his fellow worshipers, deserted him, did he denounce them and give up? No. He knew that the important thing was to do the will of his heavenly Father, and it was to him that he committed himself.

⁴ Jesus recommended that we too think in terms of giving rather than receiving: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) That is true of many things, and it certainly is true of encouragement. If we are overly concerned because others fail to give us encouragement when we think they should, we are going to get discouraged. Why not rather look for opportunities to give encouragement, and let the encouragement you receive from others be simply an added dividend? Consider that even those

2. What discouraging practices do we see in the world around us, and why are they so prevalent?

3, 4. How should we react when others fail to extend encouragement?

who fail to give encouragement when they could, often do so because they themselves are despondent; they need encouragement. Instead of becoming discouraged and disappointed with them, how much better it would be to become compassionate, strengthening even those who let us down! Surely it does make us happy to receive encouragement, but much more happiness is ours when we give it.

⁵ There are so many ways that encouragement can be given. Sincere words of commendation can mean much to a worker. Simply a word of warm appreciation for a kindness shown or a service performed spurs one on to do more of the same and to do it better. Oftentimes an act of kindness speaks more eloquently than words and bolsters the morale of everyone involved. Your fellowship, too, will encourage those who may be downhearted or lonely, and sharing with them some good news will brighten their outlook. Yes, just a friendly smile warms the hearts of others. But better than all these are the imparting of hope from the Word of God and the exhortation that we can provide by both word and example to give others the strength and courage to do what is right. If we but think in terms of giving encouragement, we will find opportunities far exceeding our expectations.

WITHIN THE FAMILY

⁶ A good place to start looking for opportunities is right at home. If we make a habit of it there, it will come naturally elsewhere. Of course, love is the basis for encouragement; it is also what holds the family together, and concerning it Paul wrote to the Colossians: "Accordingly, as God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind,

mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also. But, besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union." (Col. 3:12-14) How mutually strengthening it is for persons who apply this godly counsel to be together!

⁷ It is only natural for a man to want to please his wife and for a woman to be anxious to please her husband. (1 Cor. 7:33, 34) Yet there are few things that can be more disheartening than repeated failure in something that means so much. When a woman works hard to keep the house clean, prepare food for the family and otherwise please her husband and it is simply taken for granted, she may get discouraged. But, you may ask, is there any need to tell her that she has done well, when that is what she is supposed to do? The Bible answers when it says: "Her sons have risen up and proceeded to pronounce her happy; her owner rises up, and he praises her. There are many daughters that have shown capableness, but you—you have ascended above them all."—Prov. 31:28, 29.

⁸ Even when there are shortcomings, the bond of family love is not going to be strengthened by magnifying them out of all proportion. If need be, give the matter attention, but particularly see and express appreciation for the good work that has been done. Commendation even for little things can give one the spirit and strength to push on and do more and better in the days to come. Likewise when accidents occur there is opportunity to give encouragement. A man who appreciates what it means "that they are no longer two, but one flesh," is not going to stand back and

5. What are some of the ways to give encouragement?
6. Where should we start in making a practice of encouraging others, and why?

7, 8. What opportunities are there for a man to encourage his wife, and why is it important?

hide his wife with remarks such as, "Why do you have to be so clumsy?" She probably already feels bad enough about it. Why make it worse? Why not make her feelings as important to you as your own? A kindly word and a little assistance will bring real encouragement. It is a little thing, but it shows love, and it is love that is the perfect bond of union.—Matt. 19:5, 6.

⁹ By her very diligence a good wife also upbuilds her husband. "In her the heart of her owner has put trust, and there is no gain lacking. She has rewarded him with good, and not bad, all the days of her life. She is watching over the goings on of her household, and the bread of laziness she does not eat." (Prov. 31:11, 12, 27) Such a wife is not a competitor, one who seeks to evade his headship, but she cooperates and works willingly under his direction. She considers, not only their immediate good, but their lasting welfare. She is a "woman that fears Jehovah." (Eph. 5:22, 23; Prov. 31:30) Being of such a disposition, she puts first the spiritual welfare of the family, and of material things she takes the viewpoint: "So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." Thus she helps to ward off the snares of materialism and to avert anxiety due to excessive financial obligations that might crowd out service to God. (1 Tim. 6:6-8; Matt. 13:22) By keeping other interests in the background and by her own enthusiastic interest in spiritual matters she can encourage her husband to give these spiritual matters the attention they deserve.

¹⁰ Even with one's children, what could be a source of greater encouragement to them than to help them to learn the value of spiritual things? If they are not given thorough instruction in godly principles,

9. In what ways can a Christian wife upbuild her husband?

10. To what should children be encouraged to devote their efforts, and why?

the anxieties and frustrations that will beset them in life will cause constant irritation and grief. (Col. 3:21; Eph. 6:4) It is not going to be a blessing to them if they have been taught to pursue material possessions, devoting all their energies to work in the commercial field. What a frustration for anyone to spend all his effort building in a world that God is going to destroy because of its wickedness! How much better, how much more rewarding, how much more encouraging, to devote one's life to the service of God, if possible, as a full-time pioneer minister! As the psalmist said to God, "a day in your court-yards is better than a thousand elsewhere. I have chosen to stand at the threshold in the house of my God rather than to move around in the tents of wickedness." (Ps. 84:10) It shows love of one's children to encourage them to pursue such a life. Of course, children too should learn to give encouragement.

¹¹ Yes, young folks too can learn to think in terms of giving. They should not adopt the view that everyone is supposed to wait on them. They need to learn to show appreciation for the hard work of their parents, to listen and obey when they are spoken to, and to be willing workers under the direction of their parents in helping with chores that need to be done; more than that, taking the initiative and offering to be of assistance when they see that there are jobs that need attention. By their conduct when away from home, too, they can be a blessing to themselves and others. The Scriptures wisely counsel: "Listen to your father who caused your birth, and do not despise your mother just because she has grown old. . . . The father of a righteous one will without fail be joyful; the one becoming father to a wise one will also rejoice in him. Your father

11, 12. Are there opportunities for young folks to encourage their parents? In what ways?

and your mother will rejoice, and she that gave birth to you will be joyful.”—Prov. 23:22-25; 10:1; 15:20; 19:13.

¹² When children apply this counsel they do not fail to show appreciation for the love of their parents even when they have grown old. In 1 Timothy 5:4, 8 the counsel is recorded: “If any widow has children or grandchildren, let these learn first to practice godly devotion in their own household and to keep paying a due compensation to their parents and grandparents, for this is acceptable in God’s sight. Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith.” How encouraging it is to parents to find that they have not been forgotten by their children just because they have grown old!

RESPONSIBILITY OF OVERSEERS

¹³ Although everyone can be a source of encouragement to his fellowman, apart from one’s close companions and the members of one’s own family, those who are in positions of oversight have the greatest influence on others either to encourage or to discourage. This places upon them the obligation to be aware of the opportunities, yes, the responsibility that is theirs in this regard. In this they can learn much from the great overseers, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. By his Word of truth Jehovah gives us hope, he builds us up; he does not drive us beyond our capacity, but shows loving concern for his people. Do you as an overseer use your words to build up those with whom you work? Do you show consideration for their individual physical and mental limitations? Are they really glad to see you when you stop to

speak to them about their work, or are they apprehensive, wondering what is wrong this time? Jesus’ disciples were grateful for his fellowship. Though they called him Lord and Master, he proved himself to be a fellow worker. He was their overseer, but one who set the example for them by sharing right along with them in the work that was to be done. (1 Pet. 2:25) He knew that his disciples must learn humility, and this lesson too he taught them, not by constantly humiliating them, but by demonstrating humility in his own life. (John 13:1-17) Those who worked with him found him to be, not harsh and cutting in his remarks or in too much of a hurry to listen to them, but “mild-tempered and lowly in heart,” and in their association with him they found ‘refreshment for their souls.’—Matt. 11:29.

¹⁴ So it is that the overseer who imitates Christ does not simply tell others what to do, but as a qualified teacher he shows them, sharing in the work right along with them. He is an example to the flock. (1 Tim. 3:2) Because he does not consider himself to be above his Christian brothers, they are drawn to him and have confidence that they can look to him for help. (Matt. 23:8) They know that he recognizes the importance of getting the work done and strives for efficiency, but they know too that love will make him patient and understanding in dealing with his fellow workers.

¹⁵ It is true that at times people are going to fall short or do things that are wrong, and the overseer is the one who must see that the situation is given proper attention. Is this the time to call the

13. (a) Why do overseers have a special responsibility in the giving of encouragement? (b) In this connection, what are some of the points to which consideration can well be given?

14. (a) How does an overseer show himself to be a teacher, and with what effect on his brothers? (b) When efficiency is tempered with love, what effect does it have on one’s dealings with others?

15. In case someone falls short in his work or actually does something wrong, how do the Scriptures admonish the overseer to handle the situation, and with what objective in mind?

transgressor to account and give him a tongue-lashing? Is that necessary? Perhaps the wrong was unintentional. Note how the Scriptures say to handle the situation: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to restore such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted." (Gal. 6:1) The goal is to restore the one who has erred, not to whip him. This calls for a spirit of mildness. The result will be an upbuilding of the one who has erred.

¹⁶ In this connection, note how Elihu introduced his counsel to Job: "O Job, please hear my words, and to all my speaking do give ear. Look, Please! I have to open my mouth; my tongue with my palate has to speak. My sayings are the uprightness of my heart, and knowledge is what my lips do utter sincerely. . . . If you are able, make reply to me, array words before me; do take your station. Look! I am to the true God just what you are; from the clay I was shaped, I too. Look! No frightfulness in me will terrify you, and no pressure by me will be heavy upon you." And then he went on to reason on the situation with Job. But note how Elihu approached the problem. He entreated Job. He made it clear that before God he did not feel at all superior to Job and that there was no cause for Job to be terrified at what he was going to say. What a fine way to handle the situation!—Job 33:1-7.

¹⁷ It is just such a manner that Paul recommended to Timothy when he said: "Do not severely criticize an older man. To the contrary, entreat him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with

all chasteness." (1 Tim. 5:1, 2) Yet when wrongdoers make a practice of sin and show no sincere repentance, what needs to be encouraged is right conduct, not the wrongdoer. When such willful transgression has been thoroughly proved, it is time to apply the counsel found later on in the same chapter, at 1 Timothy 5:20: "Reprove before all onlookers persons who practice sin, that the rest also may have fear."—Heb. 12:7-11.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

¹⁸ Whether in the home or elsewhere, whether one is a congregation overseer or not, there are opportunities for all to upbuild and encourage one another. Every-one influences those around him. He can build up or he can tear down; he can stimulate or he can create indifference. Whether he wants to or not, he has influence. Let that influence be for good. Such will be the case with our speech if we follow the fine counsel recorded at Colossians 3:8, 9: "Put them all away from you, wrath, anger, injuriousness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth. Do not be lying to one another." If we have taken good things into our minds, if our hearts are filled with wholesome desires, what we speak will be upbuilding; for out of the heart's abundance the mouth speaks. (Matt. 12:34, 35) If our hearts are good, we will not speak disrespectfully or slightly of Christian overseers or of counsel received through Jehovah's organization, as did Diotrephes, but we will reckon to be "of double honor" those who are faithfully presiding over God's congregation. (3 John 9; 1 Tim. 5:17) Nor will we speak discouragingly to those who are desirous of enlarging

16. How did Elihu manifest the right viewpoint in counseling Job?

17. What advice did the apostle Paul give Timothy on admonishing others, and how was the situation to be handled when a person was found to make a deliberate practice of sin?

18. (a) How many people actually influence the lives of others, so how should that influence be used? (b) When speaking about Christian overseers or to those who are desirous of enlarging their privileges of service, how can we be upbuilding, and what examples show the importance of this?

their privileges of service, perhaps taking up full-time pioneer service or moving out to some locality where the need for Kingdom ministers is great. We will not be like the faithless spies who discouraged the Israelites with defeatist reports so that they wanted to turn back to Egypt and not go on to the Promised Land. Rather, like faithful Joshua and Caleb, we will urge them to show courage by taking hold of the service privileges that are open to them.—Num. 13:27-14:9.

¹⁹ By our very zeal and faithfulness in the service of God we can be a source of strength to one another. By our example of zealous participation in the ministry we help others to do the same. As we relate to others the fine experiences we enjoy in the ministry, as we share with them the gems of knowledge that we glean from our Bible study, we encourage one another, just as the apostles did when they visited with their Christian brothers. (Acts 15:3, 30, 31) By our concern for those who are sick and afflicted, and for those imprisoned for righteousness' sake, by our keeping in touch with them and visiting them where this is possible, we strengthen their hearts. (2 Cor. 7:6, 7; Acts 28:15) By our refusal to compromise with Satan's world we help others to stand firm. And by our willingness, not merely to inconvenience ourselves, but even to risk our life and freedom where necessary in order to upbuild one another, we give

one another courage to speak God's Word without fear. May all of Jehovah's dedicated witnesses continue to make full use of such opportunities to encourage one another.

²⁰ So let us consider the needs of those around us, let us copy the example of our Father in heaven and his Son by encouraging others. "Therefore keep comforting one other and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing." In speaking about and working with your Christian overseers, upbuild them and the viewpoint of others toward them. "We request you, brothers, to have regard for those who are working hard among you and presiding over you in the Lord and admonishing you; and to give them more than extraordinary consideration in love because of their work. Be peaceable with one another." On the other hand, you who are overseers, do not dishearten, but rather encourage your brothers. "Admonish the disorderly, speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all." No matter who we are or who it is with whom we have contact, whether at home, in the Christian congregation or in our secular work, "see that no one renders injury for injury to anyone else, but always pursue what is good toward one another and to all others." (1 Thess. 5:11-15) Yes, let us encourage one another.

19. What are some other ways in which we can encourage one another?

20. As to "building one another up," what advice is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15?

The First Bible Printed in America

The first Bible ever printed in America is no longer intelligible to anyone. The last man who could read it died in 1895. It was translated by John Eliot into the language of the Massachusetts Indians in 1663. It was entitled: "MAMUSSE WUN-NEETUPANATAMWE UPBIBLUM GOD naneeswe NUKKONE TESTAMENT MEQUOSHKINNUMUK kah wonk WUSKU TESTAMENT—THE WHOLE HOLY HIS BIBLE GOD both OLD TESTAMENT and also NEW TESTAMENT." Book collectors gladly pay up to \$7,500 for a copy of the translation, even though it cannot be read by them.



How I Kept Strong in Faith in a Chinese Communist Prison

By Harold King

ON May 27, 1963, a Chinese police officer walked with me toward the bridge separating Hong Kong from China. For over four and a half years I had been confined in the prisons of Communist China. During all this time I had not been allowed to visit with even one fellow Christian. All Bibles and Bible literature had been taken from my possession. But this was the day of my release! Across the bridge brother missionaries from the Hong Kong branch of the Watch Tower Society waited to welcome me. In a few moments I was in their arms, but speech was impossible. How grateful to God I was that I could again be among His people!

As we went on to the Society's branch office in Hong Kong those who had come to greet me inquired anxiously about my welfare, and they were eager to know about their Chris-

tian brothers who are still in Communist China. As best I could, I poured out to them the account of what had happened.

RESTRICTED ACTIVITY

It was back in 1954 that the authorities called Stanley Jones and myself, both of whom were missionaries, down to the police station and told us that we would have to stop preaching from house to house. If we wanted to do any preaching we were told to do it in our "church" and not outside of it. While they did not prohibit our conducting home Bible studies, they demanded the addresses of all those on whom we called.

This called for some adjustments in our preaching activity, in order to keep it going at least to some extent. Of course, the police had not told us that all of Jehovah's witnesses must stop preaching from house to house; they said it only to us missionaries. So our Chinese brothers did not slow down in the ministry even a little bit, but were eager to press on, showing that Jehovah's spirit was on them.

As for those with whom we conducted Bible studies, even when told that the police had demanded their names and addresses, the majority wanted their studies to continue. But pressures increased. As soon as a foreigner entered a lane of Chinese homes, he was spotted. He was not stopped from going in, but when he left, the "lane representative" would go directly to the home where he had been to find out what he had been doing there. This caused some to become intimidated. Pressures also built up from another quarter: there were political meetings that they were expected to attend. More and more of their time was taken, and some began to fall back. On the other hand, those with faith that Jehovah God would back them

up continued to study and attend the congregation meetings regularly, refusing to get involved in the political sessions at the factories and schools.

TRIAL OF FAITH FOR CHINESE WITNESSES

Then direct action began to be taken against our zealous Chinese publishers of the Kingdom. Nancy Yuan was the first one of our Christian sisters to be arrested in Shanghai, being taken away from her four children, the youngest of whom was only a year old. Efforts on our part to intervene in her behalf were all repulsed. Where she was sent we did not know. But we do know that a letter to her mother about a year after her arrest showed that she was still strong in faith and had not wavered in her confidence in Jehovah's power to deliver.

From 1957 onward the government operated what was called a "rectification" campaign. Every worker was required to write an autobiography and then attend special meetings, where he was criticized on his conduct and his outlook on life. Here our brothers ran into great difficulty. They had been preaching to their workmates, telling them of the end of this wicked world and the hope of a righteous new world under Jesus Christ. But now these workmates turned on them and charged that they had been preaching that the Chinese People's Republic was going to be destroyed by God. Those who refused to accept the socialist view of things, as well as those who refused to attend such sessions, were soon arrested. One by one our brothers went to jail.

Up to this time there had been a peak of fifty-eight publishers in the congregation at Shanghai, and publishers who had moved had spread the "good news" to other centers throughout the vast territory of China. On Sunday there were 120 or more persons attending the meetings in Shanghai alone. But gradually the fearful ones

left off their association with us. Nevertheless, the central core of the congregation became even more resolute, determined to continue in the work that God had given them to do. They were fearless, because they had full confidence in the almighty power of the true God.

MISSIONARIES TO PRISON

On October 14, 1958, when breakfast had just been spread in our missionary home, and Stanley Jones was about to offer prayer, a loud pounding came on the door. In a moment the police were in upon us, guns in hand, and we were put in handcuffs. At first Stanley protested that the guns and handcuffs were not necessary, because we were Christians, but to no avail. With the neighbors called in as witnesses, the house was searched from top to bottom. But nothing was found except our Bibles and Bible literature and the records we kept in the ministry. At noon we were hustled into two waiting automobiles and taken to the police station. That morning was the last time I had the freedom to speak to Stanley. He had been a fine partner in the Lord's service. His heart was always tied in with the hearts of the Chinese brothers. He had a deep appreciation of spiritual things, and from what I have heard in roundabout ways, he is still strong in devotion to Jehovah God, though he remains in prison in Communist China.

At prison the interrogation began. At first it was three times a day. Later, twice a day. Then less often. No physical violence was used. Not a blow was ever struck. There was only the persistent questioning and the writing of summaries of what was said at these sessions. It was extremely trying. I knew what I had done while living in Shanghai; I knew what I had said. But I had not done and said things with the motive that the govern-

ment attached to them. For instance, we had taught the people from the Bible that Satan is the god of this world, and that this wicked world is going to be destroyed at the battle of Armageddon. But for us to agree that this was subversive activity against the State was preposterous. Yet that is what the authorities wanted us to say. They were firm in their charge that we were agents of imperialism, but we were not. We found that what they call an "imperialist" is anyone who is not a Communist and whom they believe to be fighting against communism. Any refusal to admit to the charges made was viewed as failure to admit our "crimes." It did seem to satisfy them to some extent, however, when I said that it was true that if everyone responded to the message we were preaching (which they obviously would not), then it *could* result in the situation they envisaged. Two full years, largely in solitary confinement, were spent in "preparing" me for trial.

The trial itself was very brief. Charges were read, and I was permitted to answer only Yes or No to questions asked; no explanations were permitted. I was sentenced to five years in prison, two of which I had already spent. Stanley, who had been in charge of the work, was sentenced to seven years. That is the last time I saw him, but even then we were not permitted to speak.

KEEPING STRONG IN FAITH

When I was first put in prison, the cell was infested with vermin, all of which seemed to be extremely hungry. There was no way I could get away from them. The attacks persisted all night, and I could not sleep. The rice and water I was given to eat gave me indigestion. The next morning when the warder came to my cell he realized that I was in a very bad state, and he sent me to the prison doctor. That day the cell was cleaned and sprayed, and my diet

was changed. The cell itself was bare; only a covered wooden bucket being provided as a toilet. I had to sit on the floor and eat on the floor, and at night I slept on the floor, though some bedding was permitted and this I could spread under myself. No writing materials were permitted in my possession except to write the summary of interrogation sessions. Virtually the only reading matter I saw was a Chinese news review. I was not allowed to do any work beyond cleaning my own cell. I was left with no alternative but to sit and think.

Right from the start I realized that I would have to take steps to stay strong in faith. No sooner had I been locked in my cell on the day of my arrest than I got down on my knees to pray aloud, but almost at once I was interrupted when the guard swung open the inspection window and demanded to know who I was talking to. I explained that I was praying to my God as a Christian should. "Well, you can't do that in here," he ordered. So I sat down and continued to say my prayers less noticeably.

To keep alive my appreciation of spiritual things I arranged for a program of "preaching" activity. But to whom does one preach when in solitary confinement? I decided that I would build up some appropriate Bible sermons from the things I could remember and then preach to imaginary characters. Then I started out on the work, as it were, knocking on an imaginary door and witnessing to an imaginary householder, visiting several doors during the morning. In time I met an imaginary Mrs. Carter, who showed some interest, and after a number of return visits we arranged to have a regular Bible study. In the course of this study we covered the principal themes from the book "*Let God Be True*," as I remembered them. All this I did aloud, so that the sound of these things would further impress them on my

mind. I am sure that the warders thought I was going out of my mind, but it was really keeping me strong in faith and of a sound mind. It helped to keep me equipped to take up the ministry again when I should be released. I had confidence that Jehovah our God is able to preserve his servants and deliver them, if only they remain faithful to him. No, I did not feel that he had to get me out of prison to accomplish that; my expectation was of deliverance into the new world. I felt like certain faithful Hebrews of ancient times. When called to trial before the king because they would not forsake the worship of God, they said: "If it is to be, our God whom we are serving is able to rescue us. Out of the burning fiery furnace and out of your hand, O king, he will rescue us. But if not, let it become known to you, O king, that your gods are not the ones we are serving, and the image of gold that you have set up we will not worship."—Dan. 3:17, 18.

After my trial, when I was transferred from the detention house to the Shanghai prison, my living conditions improved. Although I was kept in an isolated cell and not permitted to mix with the other prisoners, in time I was granted a bit more freedom of movement. I was allowed to spend time during the day out in the gallery by my prison cell; and, while there was no furniture in the cell, there was a small table and stool in the gallery that I could use. I was also given the use of writing materials, and these I immediately put to use.

SONGS OF PRAISE TO BOLSTER FAITH

I began committing to writing some Bible themes in such a form that they could be used as verses for a song, and then I would hum various combinations of notes until I found a little tune that would fit. In time I built up a sizable collection of

songs designed to help me keep Jehovah's purposes in mind. Some of the songs had only a few verses, while others had as many as 144 verses, tracing the promises in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. These helped me to review portions of the Bible and to trace the themes that run through the Scriptures. For example, I had songs entitled "Selecting the Seed," "Answer the Call of Jehovah," "The Memorial," "The Greatest of These Is Love," "More than a Million Brothers," and "From House to House." What strength these gave to me as I sang:

What power or force of old Satan
Ever could tear us apart
From a God whom we love
oh so deeply and true,
Yes, love with the whole of our heart.
Could you tear up Sinai's mountain
And plant it in the depths of the sea?
'Twould be an easier task, friend,
than ever to try
To tear us from Jah's sovereignty!

But as we stand loyal to Jehovah,
With unbreakable love as a tie,
The most desperate actions
of Satan, our foe,
We shall firmly and surely defy.
Should even he go to the full limit,
And slay us because of our stand,
There, by our side, stands Christ Jesus
our King,
With the keys of the grave in his hand.

Every morning before breakfast I would sing about five of my songs, and in the evening another four or five.

Although my initial endeavors at prayer in prison were rather roughly interrupted, I realized the importance of staying close to Jehovah. I might be isolated from my fellowmen, but no one could isolate me from God. When I was moved to the Shanghai jail I again determined to pray in a more open manner. I realized that this was one way that I could give a witness to those around me. So, open to the view

of any who might pass my cell, I knelt in my cell three times a day and prayed aloud, keeping in mind Daniel, of whom the Bible speaks. Even when it was forbidden by law, "three times in a day he was kneeling on his knees and praying and offering praise before his God." (Dan. 6: 10) I prayed that God would grant me the wisdom to say and do the right things, to honor him. I prayed that his glorious purpose would be triumphant. Earnestly I prayed on behalf of my brothers in every part of the world. It seemed that on such occasions God's spirit guided my mind to the most beneficial matters and gave me a feeling of composure. What spiritual strength and comfort prayer brought to me! And by this means all came to know me as a Christian minister.

Yet at times I was assailed with doubts about whether I had really done all I should have in Jehovah's service before my imprisonment. At first I worried about it, but then I found that I was benefiting by reviewing the situation, seeing where I had fallen short and where I could do better in the future; and I resolved that I would be a much better minister in the future, if I should be given the freedom with which to do so. Making this a matter of prayer to Jehovah, I felt reassured, and the result was that my days in jail strengthened my conviction and my determination to carry on in Jehovah's service.

Each year I arranged to celebrate the Memorial of Christ's death in the best way I could. From my prison window I watched the moon grow full near the start of spring. I calculated as carefully as I could the date for the celebration. Of course, I had no way to obtain the emblems, the bread and the wine, and the warders refused to give

such things to me. So the first two years I could only go through the motions, using imaginary emblems, even as I had preached to imaginary householders. Then the third year I found some tins of black currants in my Red Cross parcel, and from these I succeeded in making wine, while rice, which is unleavened, served for bread. This year I had both my wine and some unleavened water biscuits from the Red Cross parcel to use as emblems. I sang and prayed and gave a regular talk for the occasion, just as would be done in any congregation of Jehovah's people. So I felt that each year I was united with my brothers all over the world on this most important occasion.

Though my activities in prison were extremely limited, I did endeavor to witness by example. I recalled the faithfulness of the Jew Nehemiah, who, while in captivity, performed so faithfully as butler to the king of Persia that he was granted leave to go to Jerusalem to tend to matters involving the worship of his God. Repeatedly I asked for an assignment of labor to perform, but this was denied. However, it was required of every prisoner that he clean his own cell, and I endeavored to make mine exemplary. Gradually I expanded my efforts, cleaning the area in front of my cell during the time I was allowed to be out, and then the empty cells near mine. In time I was even cleaning and polishing the warders' desks. I was sincere in my desire to do something helpful, and in time this won the confidence of the warders. As one of them said to me: 'Everything you do you do so well, whether it is cleaning the place or studying the language. I hope that when you get back to England you will use this zeal of yours to serve the peo-

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Religion and the Nuclear Age.
- Surviving Through Faith.
- Do You Pay for Your Sins After Death?
- Proper Viewpoint of Discipline.

ple.' I assured him that is exactly what I looked forward to doing.

I never felt any hatred for these men who were assigned to guard me. It seemed to me that they were much like the army officers that were given the job of nailing Jesus on the torture stake; they did not know what they were doing. So I prayed that God would forgive them, and punish only those who were really reprehensible and malicious in their hatred for him and for his people.

AGAIN WITH JEHOVAH'S PEOPLE!

When, at last, I was told that the time for my release was near, and five months early at that, how relieved I was! After being given tours of Shanghai and the surrounding territory, and being shown what communism has done for the people in a material way, I was finally sent across the bridge into the arms of my waiting Christian brothers on the twenty-seventh of May. What a wonderful thing it is to be back among the people of God!

The brothers in Hong Kong were so lovingly kind to me that it was indeed hard to tear myself away. But on June 1 I was put on a plane en route to my home in England. The first stop was in Japan, where a large group of Witnesses were on hand to greet me. They had not been notified of my travel plans, but they had been following the news of my release in the public press and they figured that I just might be on that plane. They wanted to be there to welcome me.

In New York I was overwhelmed with joy to see the Watch Tower Society's president, Brother Knorr, at the airport to greet me, and he was the first to put his arms around me in a loving welcome. Great changes had taken place at the

Brooklyn Bethel home and printing plant since I had last seen them in 1947, before leaving for China, but the same spirit of love is there, only on an enlarged scale.

Here, too, the brothers wanted to know of my experiences, and I was glad to relate them and to assure them with conviction that, in spite of the events of the last four and a half years, never in all my twenty-five years of full-time ministry has my faith been so strong as it is today. Why so? Because there are no guns, no walls, no prison bars that can keep the spirit of God from reaching his people! If we have applied ourselves to a study of his Word and allowed it to sink down deep into our hearts, there is nothing to fear. We do not stand in our own strength. But with God's almighty power he is able to make even the most frail of us come off victorious in the face of persecution!

● How strong is your faith? Could you face up to such constant interrogation and years of isolation in prison and yet not falter? Remember, the Scriptures say that "all those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." (2 Tim. 3:12) The time to fortify yourself is before persecution comes. How? By wise use of your time now, studying and meditating on God's Word so it becomes deeply rooted in your heart, by regularly associating with Jehovah's people, and by using what you learn in Jehovah's service. Thus you will be among those "who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." (Heb. 5:14) This perception is vital when confronted with opposition. But if you rely on Jehovah now, availing yourself of the spiritual provisions he has made, you will be in position to draw strength from him in time of crisis, and he will sustain you.—The Publishers.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES IN

Keeping Jehovah's Worship Pure

IN ORDER to preserve the purity of Jehovah's worship, the Bible lays upon the Christian congregation the responsibility to 'remove the wicked man from among themselves.' (1 Cor. 5:13) This cutting off, disfellowshipping, or excommunicating from God's visible organization preserves His pure worship, acts as a protection for the entire congregation, and also may move the wrongdoer to repent of his wicked works and become reconciled to God.—2 Cor. 7:10.

In the July 1, 1963, issue of the *Watchtower* magazine, the Scriptural principles involved in disfellowshipping, or excommunicating, were discussed. The purpose of this procedure, the consequences to those disfellowshipped, and the attitude that other members of the Christian congregation are to take were examined from God's Word. The principles are definite, clear and easily understood where a disfellowshipped person is not related to others in the Christian congregation. All association with him is severed.

But what of those who are related to the one cut off? What should be the attitude of those who do have family or blood ties with that one? In analyzing the responsibilities of family members in keeping Jehovah's worship pure, there are two situations that must be considered. One is where relatives in good standing with the congregation *do not* live under the same roof with the disfellowshipped person; that is, where relatives are not of the immediate family circle. The other situation is where those in good standing *do*

live under the same roof with the disfellowshipped person, where the disfellowshipped one is a member of the immediate family circle.

RELATIVES NOT IN IMMEDIATE FAMILY CIRCLE

The disfellowshipping of a relative does not cancel out natural blood ties. However, it would be well to appreciate that only the contacts absolutely necessary in matters pertaining to family interests should be carried on with one who is disfellowshipped and who lives outside the family circle.

The principle here is similar to that mentioned in the July 1 issue of *The Watchtower*, page 413, where it was pointed out that Christians who are secularly employed at the same establishment with a disfellowshipped person do not converse with him unless it is necessary in order to perform the work, and then the conversation is limited to that work. In the case of the disfellowshipped relative who does not live in the same home, contact with him is also kept to what is absolutely necessary. As with secular employment, this contact is limited and even curtailed completely if at all possible.

An important point to note is that, while there are natural ties that may be the reason for an occasional contact, the spiritual ties are completely severed. There can be no discussing of matters of worship with relatives who are disfellowshipped.

What if a person cut off from God's congregation unexpectedly visits dedicated

relatives? What should the Christian do then? If this is the first occurrence of such visit, the dedicated Christian can, if his conscience permits, carry on family courtesies on that particular occasion. However, if his conscience does not permit this, he is under no obligation to do so. If courtesies are extended, though, the Christian should make it clear that this will not be made a regular practice. If it becomes habitual, it is no different from associating with any other disfellowshipped person, and it violates the spirit of the disfellowshipping decree. The excommunicated relative should be made to realize that his visits are not now welcomed as they were previously when he was walking correctly with Jehovah.—2 John 9-11.

It is vital that dedicated Christians in the congregation, by their actions, make clear to the disfellowshipped relative that his course of conduct is disapproved by the family. They must maintain a firm stand for righteous principles. The wrongdoer has to realize that his status is completely changed, that his faithful Christian relatives thoroughly disapprove of his wicked course and show this disapproval by limiting contacts to only those which are unavoidable.

The importance of this can readily be seen in smaller communities, where some congregations may include several related family groups. If all family ties with an excommunicated person were kept as before, in what way could it be said that the brothers were cooperating with the disfellowshipping procedure, which is designed to keep God's visible organization clean? Actually, they would be violating the spirit of the disfellowshipping action. Furthermore, instead of this being any kindness to the disfellowshipped one, they would actually be doing him harm.

Permitting the transacting of necessary business with relatives who are disfellow-

shipped should be viewed as the exception. The Scriptural rules are: "Keep your eye on those who create divisions and occasions for stumbling contrary to the teaching that you have learned, and avoid them." "Quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man." "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."—Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:11, 13.

The foundation principle for this matter is found at Matthew 12:47-50. Someone said to Jesus: "Look! Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak to you." Jesus replied: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? . . . whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Bible principles do not support regular association with relatives who do not live in the same home with a disfellowshipped person. Our main purpose should be to keep the worship of Jehovah pure. We should not see how close we can get to relatives who are disfellowshipped from Jehovah's organization, but we should "quit mixing in company" with them.

INSIDE THE FAMILY CIRCLE

Additional principles come into play where a disfellowshipped person lives in the same home and is part of the same family circle with Christians. Some of the Scriptural principles that need to be taken into consideration are (1) 1 Timothy 5:8: "If anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." (2) Matthew 22:21: "Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (3) Matthew 19:5, 6: "For this reason a man

will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh' . . . Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart."

(4) Colossians 3:18, 19: "You wives, be in subjection to your husbands . . . You husbands, keep on loving your wives." (5) Ephesians 6:1, 2: "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord . . . 'Honor your father and your mother.'"

The Christian head of the house, the father, is therefore required to continue the physical association with, and to provide food, shelter and clothing for those in his household who are disfellowshipped. If the disfellowshipped one is a minor child, the parents cannot disassociate themselves from him. He is still part of the household. God's laws require that the parental responsibility be carried out. Even Caesar's laws require that minor children be provided for by the parents. So the parents are still under command from God to correct and discipline the child. This must be done by using Biblical principles. Parents should require that the minor attend the family study and listen, although he would not participate in the discussion with the group. The parents should strongly recommend his reading the Bible and publications explaining the Bible, such as the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines and other Bible helps. If the disfellowshipped minor has questions to ask, he can ask one of his parents in private and he will be shown how to find the answers or be given the answer, but that is all. This, together with the minor's attendance at Christian meetings, will aid in his restoration. (Jas. 5:20) Parents must appreciate the seriousness of their child's dedication and baptism and realize that dedication to Jehovah puts the child under Jehovah's corrective arrangements when his laws are violated.

Regarding the relationship between husband and wife, Jesus' words at Matthew 19:5, 6 must be adhered to. No one can set apart man and wife, not even if one of the two is disfellowshipped. The exception, of course, is where adultery has been committed. Then the innocent mate may depart if so desired. (Matt. 19:9) When attending congregation meetings at the Kingdom Hall, husband and wife, together with children, are to remain together and not be separated because one is disfellowshipped. There is no spiritual communication involved here. They are merely sitting together as a family. This family bond must not be tampered with. However, it would be improper for the mate in good standing to try to force the company of the disfellowshipped mate on other brothers in the congregation when conversing with them. While the family unit stays together, the excommunicated member of the family still may not associate with other members of the congregation.

But does this principle of staying together apply if a man and woman are engaged to be married and one is afterward disfellowshipped? No, as the marriage has not been consummated. The Christian should sever the tie with the disfellowshipped one. "Get out from among them, and separate yourselves." (2 Cor. 6:17) If the Christian disregards this by marrying the disfellowshipped one, he too can be disfellowshipped.

Although established family ties in the household remain unbroken when one is disfellowshipped and the normal functions of the household are carried out daily as usual, there is something that is broken. This is the spiritual communication between the one disfellowshipped and others in the family circle. As with other examples previously mentioned, when one is disfellowshipped, discussion with him of

matters involving worship must be terminated.

Hence, if it is the wife that is excommunicated, the husband will continue to conduct the family Bible study with the children, and on appropriate occasions he may lead his children in prayer. The wife may sit in and hear the prayer or follow along in the study, thereby taking in valuable information, but she would not contribute to the discussion.

If the husband is the one disfellowshipped, the wife and children are still in subjection to the head in family matters. This is not canceled out. The wife does not become the head of the house in carrying out the daily pursuits of life. But if the husband sincerely wants to do what is right, he will take the necessary actions to reconcile himself with Jehovah and his visible organization. He will realize that he is not qualified to direct family spiritual affairs. However, the wife, at some convenient time when the husband is not in charge of the situation, will arrange to study the Bible with her children.

The same principle applies at mealtimes. There can be no spiritual association here. The disfellowshipped family head is not in position to lead his family in prayer, nor would he properly call on someone else present to represent the family in prayer,

thus having them do so at his direction. Any who want to pray may do so privately. However, in his absence, faithful dedicated members of the family could join together in prayer.

If the excommunicated husband insists on offering prayer at mealtimes, the dedicated members of the household would not say "Amen" to the prayer, nor would they join hands as some have the custom, as this would be participating spiritually. They could bow their heads and offer their own silent prayer to Jehovah. If he insists on expressing his views on religious matters, he cannot be prevented from doing so in his own house; but faithful Christian members of the household are not obligated to participate in a discussion. They show respect for the decree disfellowshipping the wrongdoer from God's organization. "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

It is a serious responsibility for Christians to keep the worship of Jehovah pure. To do this the Christian will comply with Jehovah's righteous requirements, even where members of his own family are cut off from God's visible organization. Love for God comes first. The Christian takes appropriate measures to show he agrees with Jehovah's ways, thereby pleasing Him and maintaining pure worship.

GLORY TO GOD?

◆ A candid observation in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* testifies how ineffective Christendom's Christmas celebration is in bringing glory to God: "The religious significance of Christmas has been too commonly minimized among Christians, the day among adults being degraded into one merely for the exchange of presents, often neither given nor received in any affection, but out of a sense of obligation or as barter. In too many homes the children, whose day it more particularly is, are not taught to link their merry-making on Christmas with the gift of God to the world in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. Although some of our denominations hold service on that day, the vast majority of Protestants do not attend, and most of our denominations keep their churches closed."—Volume III, page 48.

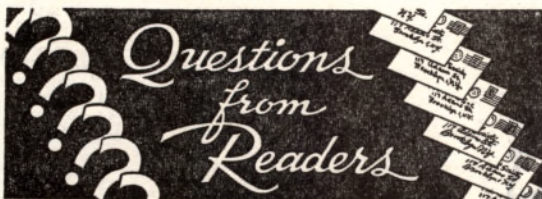
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HANDBILL

THE following experience was related by a woman witness of Jehovah at a circuit assembly in Illinois: "I was born into a Catholic family and had gone to several churches when, finally, I decided not to go to any of them as there was 'something lacking.' Several years ago I returned home from work one day to find a handbill advertising a public lecture of Jehovah's witnesses. I was not impressed with the title of the lecture, nor the name Jehovah's witnesses, as I never heard of them before; in fact, I did not even know who Jehovah was! But the message on the other side of the handbill asked the question, 'How Well Do You Know Your Bible?' This impressed me.

"I always wanted to know the Bible, so I wrote out a check and sent for the *New World Translation* before making supper and went to the corner to mail it. After I received the Bible, a Witness called on me one Saturday morning. During our conversation I recognized she knew something about the Bible. I mentioned that I wished I knew the Bible, and a study was started immediately. After

she left, my husband threw up his hands and said, 'Don't get me mixed up with these people!' Not knowing anything about 'these people,' I read the book *'Let God Be True'* almost in its entirety that night. In the morning I mentioned to him that this was the only book on religion I had ever read that made sense. It was not long afterward that he joined our Bible study.

"In the meantime my mother passed away. My sister called and said, 'Don't study anymore with these people. With mother's death and your studying the Bible, you are so confused. I'm coming over to straighten you out and comfort you.' That evening I placed the book *'Let God Be True'* with her and started a study the following week, which continued until we were both dedicated to Jehovah and baptized on the same day. My husband, who did not want anything to do with 'these people,' was baptized fifteen months later. I thank Jehovah God for sending someone to spread the Word of life—and I thank that someone who left a little handbill at our door when we were not at home."



● Why does the *New World Translation* speak of the men who came from the East to view the child Jesus as astrologers? (Matt. 2:1) According to Strong's dictionary of Greek words, the word here is *magos* and means 'a Magian, i.e., Oriental scientist, by implication a magician, a sorcerer.'—R. A., United States.

Because *magos* means Magus or Magian, various Bible versions do have "Magi" in a marginal or footnote reading at Matthew 2:1, such as the *Newberry Study Bible* and the *American Standard Version*. On the other hand, some translations have the word "Magi" right in the text. Among such are *Weymouth* and the *Catholic Confraternity*. Now, who were these magi and for what were they renowned?

Many dictionaries speak of the magi as being a priestly caste of ancient Media and Persia.

The *Imperial Bible Dictionary* gives considerable information about the background of the magi:

"According to Herodotus the magi were a tribe of the Medes, who professed to interpret dreams, and had the official charge of sacred rites; they were, in short, the learned and priestly class, and having, as was supposed, the skill of deriving from books and the observation of the stars a supernatural insight into coming events, they came to be possessed of great influence, and never failed to be consulted on all great occasions. Whether there was a native class among the Babylonians who practised the same learning and arts, or the Median tribe became naturalized also there, there can be no doubt that a class bearing the name of magi, and holding much the same position as among the Persians, existed in Babylon. Nay, so much did they appear to be at home there, that the word Chaldean came to be nearly synonymous with magus among the Greeks and Romans, and reference is also made in Scripture to the great account that was made among the Babylonians of that kind of mystic lore and assumed supernatural skill, for which the magi

were renowned. Indeed, later investigations tend rather to make Babylon than Media and Persia the centre of full-blown magianism. 'Originally, the Median priests were not called magi. . . . From the Chaldeans, however, they received the name of magi for their priestly caste, and it is thus we are to explain what Herodotus says of the magi being a Median tribe.'"

It is true that the word *magos* can mean "Oriental scientist," but what kind of science was it for which the magi were famous? Was it science as it is understood today? Hardly. Rather, it appears to have been compounded largely of magic and astrology. The prophet Isaiah said concerning Babylon and its magi: "Stand still, now, with your spells and with the abundance of your sorceries, in which you have toiled from your youth; that perhaps you might be able to benefit, that perhaps you might strike people with awe. You have grown weary with the multitude of your counselors. Let them stand up, now, and save you, the worshipers of the heavens, the lookers at the stars, those giving out knowledge at the new moons concerning the things that will come upon you."—Isa. 47:12, 13.

Rightly, then, the word *magos* at Matthew

2:1 was taken by the ancient readers of Matthew to refer to astrologers. Among them are Justin, Origen and Tertullian. Wrote Tertullian, for instance: "We know the mutual alliance of magic and astrology. The interpreters of the stars, then, were the first . . . to present Him [Jesus] 'gifts.'" (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. III, p. 65) The name "Magi" became current "as a generic term for astrologers in the East."—*The New Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia*, Vol. 22, p. 8076.

So it is most likely that those particular "magi" or "wise men" of Matthew 2:1 were astrologers, for were they not being guided by lights in the sky, by what appeared to be a moving star? (Matt. 2:2) This is strong circumstantial evidence that these magi were astrologers. Thus *The New Testament* by Charles B. Williams reads "star-gazers," at Matthew 2:1, with a footnote in explanation: "That is, students of stars in relation to events on earth." Fittingly, then, not only the *New World Translation*, but also three other modern English translations, *An American Translation*, *The New English Bible* and *The New Testament in Modern English* by J. B. Phillips, all read, at Matthew 2:1, "astrologers."



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