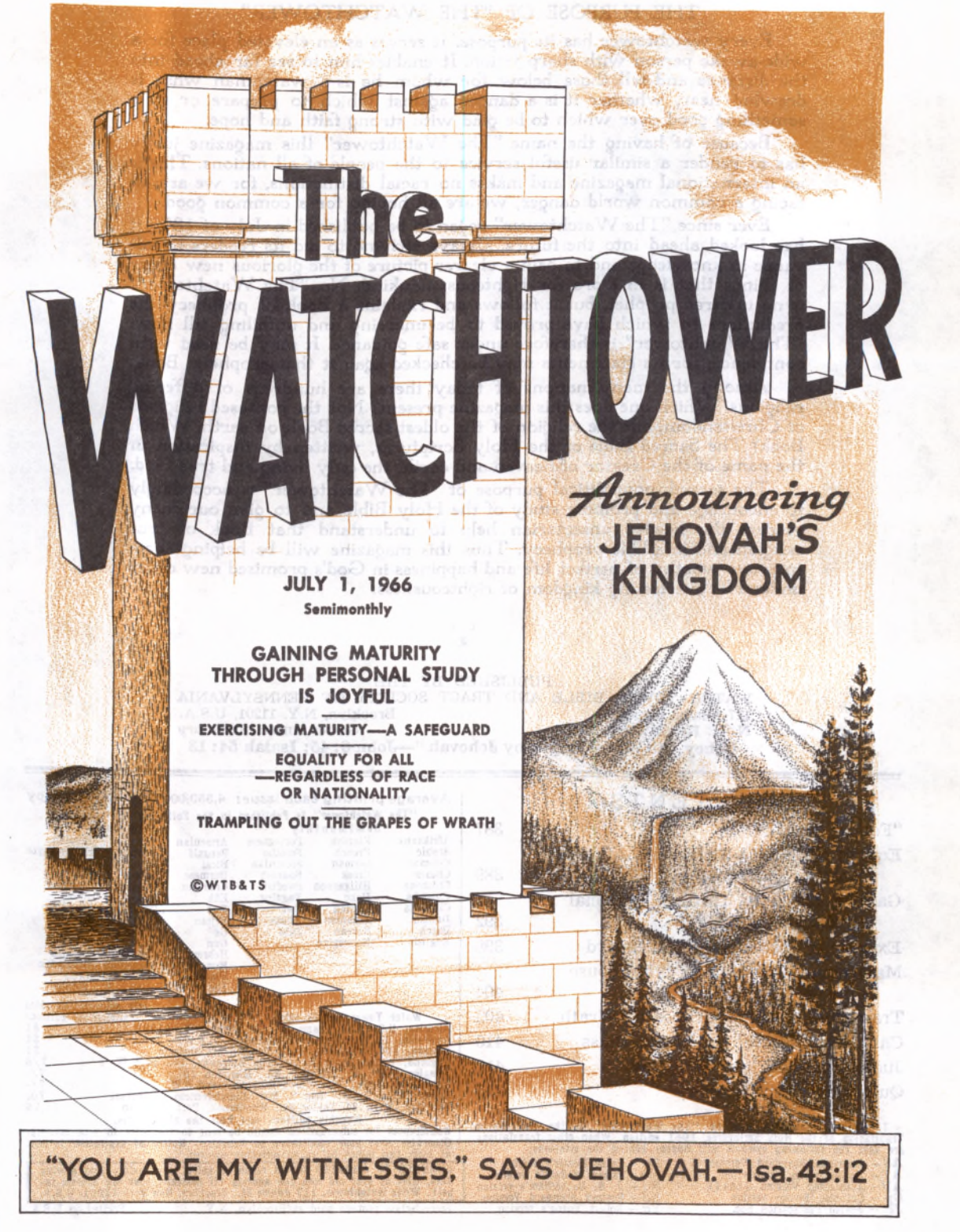




The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

JULY 1, 1966

Semimonthly

**GAINING MATURITY
THROUGH PERSONAL STUDY
IS JOYFUL**

EXERCISING MATURITY—A SAFEGUARD

**EQUALITY FOR ALL
—REGARDLESS OF RACE
OR NATIONALITY**

TRAMPLING OUT THE GRAPES OF WRATH

©WTB&TS

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

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

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Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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"Follow Me"

THESE were the commanding words that fell upon the ears of two brothers as they were busily engaged at their daily occupation. And they obeyed, leaving their jobs as fishermen immediately to follow the speaker.

Who could command with such confidence? Who could inspire his hearers to forsake everything to which they had been devoted for something new? The speaker was already well known to them, for they had been told by John the Baptist that this one was "the Lamb of God." Reports of his marvelous miracles had spread throughout all Galilee. Yes, it was the voice of Jesus of Nazareth, and already these men knew in their hearts that he was the promised Messiah.—John 1:36.

Far from obeying a like command today, the majority of people have no intention of following anyone. They prefer to be led by their own whims and desires, whether these are detrimental to themselves and others or not. They like to feel that they are totally independent, that they have no need of anyone's guidance. They claim they want to get the most out of life, and the only way they know is to cater to their own selfish impulses.

Yet they fail to achieve lasting happiness and peace of mind. They find that they have been chasing the wind.

Of course, there are multitudes today who claim that

they have complied with the above command. They call themselves "followers" of Christ, yet when we compare their course of action with that of Peter and Andrew, who responded to the same command nineteen hundred years ago, we note a great discrepancy.—Matt. 4:19, *Authorized Version*.

Peter and Andrew not only followed Jesus as long as he was in the flesh, but even after his death they continued to follow him. How? By living the kind of life that he lived; by carrying on the great preaching work that he commenced while still with them; by adopting the same view toward worldly people and institutions that he held; by 'following his steps closely.'—1 Pet. 2:21.

Those disciples knew that Jesus' command did not mean they were to be merely observers of what he said and did. They were to become imitators of him, for he explained that he would make them "fishers of men." That they so understood the matter is proved by the Bible's record of how they learned from him, copied him and transformed their lives in accordance with the pattern he presented.

In that first century those who followed

Jesus were eager to be trained and to share with him in his preaching campaign. Even married men such as Peter, and family men such as Philip the evangelizer, responded wholeheartedly and followed Jesus' example. (1 Cor. 9:5; Acts 21:8, 9) Those with family obligations did not neglect their families while they went out preaching. No, they discharged their duties toward their families, but they also set aside time to study the example of Jesus and then share as they could in his preaching campaign. They really "followed" their Master.

Those early Christians were undaunted by Jesus' warning that those who followed him must be prepared to deny themselves many pleasurable things, must use their assets for the furtherance of the Kingdom work, must be ready to endure hardships. (Matt. 16:24-26; 19:16-21; Luke 9:58) They were eager to be his followers. Even when reminded that father and mother must not be permitted to come before their loyalty to Christ, they continued faithful. After all, was not this God's own Son, and had not God appointed him to be King of all humans who will get eternal life? Surely there could never be any real loss through obeying his command, responding to the wonderful opportunity to follow *him*!

The stark fact is that in this twentieth century people who feel that they cannot deny themselves little comforts, hobbies, personal interests in life, the freedom to do as they wish, can never really become, while in that attitude, followers of Christ. To allow any other goal in life to rival or eclipse the goal set before one by Jesus is to disqualify oneself as a follower of God's Son, that highly exalted One who said: "I am the way and the truth and the life."—John 14:6.

To follow him means hearing and getting the sense of his teaching, striving to

spread that teaching to others, while always maintaining in our daily lives the same good conduct that he exemplified. That is what first-century Christians were noted for. They worked with their hands and provided for their daily necessities, but they refused to allow other activities to become more important in their lives than sharing in the preaching of the Kingdom message and caring for fellow Christians.

Today there are even greater opportunities for men, women and young people to heed Jesus' command and truly become his followers. The thrilling words "Follow me" can be responded to in our day with the same promptness and eagerness as was shown by the apostles, and with the same blessed results. Appreciating this fact, Max Larson, a director of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., addressing a class of graduating missionaries of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead on February 27, 1966, used Jesus' command, "Follow me," as his theme. Among other things, he said: "You want to be faithful missionaries in your assignment and receive the prize of everlasting life. That is your goal. You can realize it by following your Guide, Christ Jesus, and by remaining faithful to God's Word and his organization."

Those words apply equally to all followers of Christ today, for wherever a Christian is located, there is an assignment for him to equip himself to preach to and teach others. The Christian will find it helpful to begin each day by giving prayerful consideration to the depth of meaning embodied in that command, "Follow me." Constantly he will find additional ways to apply in his life the marvelous example of the One who issued that command. No privilege can be greater than that of following closely in the steps of God's own beloved Son.

"IMPOSSIBLE! It will never be realized! Equality for persons of all races and nationalities is unrealistic. There will always be inequality." So many persons argue.

Observed the editor of the London *Sunday Telegram* in an article reprinted in the magazine *U.S. News & World Report*: "Is it reasonable or realistic for men of

good will to go on assuming that black and whites, at least in the crucial continents of Africa and North America, are ever going to live amicably side by side in genuinely multiracial societies? My answer is emphatically 'No.' White men in predominantly black societies are almost certainly going to *become* underprivileged and black men in white countries are going to *remain* so." In other words, inequalities are inevitable. A person, *because* he is of a certain race or nationality, will always be underprivileged and downtrodden, he feels. As he sees it, opportunities for an education, to obtain jobs and to enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness will never be equal.

Judged from human experience, this, unfortunately, seems all too true. It has long been the practice for people of one race or nationality to dominate over and even enslave people of another race or nationality. The lands of Christendom are no exception. Although Negro slavery was abolished in the United States of America over a hundred years ago, inequalities still exist. In fact, a leading religious journal, *The Christian Century*, lamented recently

EQUALITY FOR ALL



—Regardless of race or nationality

Will peoples of all races and nationalities ever be treated as equals? Are inequalities inevitable?

regarding the country's churches: "Most local congregations either only grudgingly accept or positively exclude Negroes from their fellowship." Obviously, equality is not enjoyed today.

**EQUALITY
FOR ALL—
IN WHAT
SENSE?**

It is true that various factors prevent equality from being realized in a total sense, even among persons of the same race. Individuals have different dispositions, natural endowments and inclinations. Some persons, for instance, have an ear for music, a natural singing voice or a similar gift. Others are clearly not equal to these gifted persons in such achievements. Yet, on the other hand, another person may have superior aptitudes or natural skills in a different field.

Races or nationalities, too, apparently have different natural endowments or dispositions. For example, some nationalities have greater height of stature, which gives them an advantage over other nationalities in international basketball competition. So physical characteristics may sometimes create inequalities. Natural disposition and environment also seem to allow some races to excel above others in certain respects.

Although, admittedly, not all persons are equal in the strictest sense of the word, this does not mean it is not God's will for people of all races and nationalities to enjoy eventually equal rights and privileges. True, some say inequalities are inevitable, that people will always be discriminated against because of race or national ex-

traction. But, happily, not so! The Bible reveals that the time will come when a person, regardless of his skin color or place of origin, will enjoy the same privileges as one of a different race or national origin.

THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS

It is noteworthy that Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity, did not discriminate against people because of their race or nationality. True, his earthly ministerial assignment was particularly to the Jews, yet he associated with and healed non-Jews also. One example of this occurred shortly after he had given his now famous Sermon on the Mount and had entered the nearby city of Capernaum. There representatives from a non-Jewish army officer approached and requested that he heal the officer's beloved servant. What was Jesus' attitude?

Why, he responded to the request and promptly started off for the man's home. Jesus was not influenced by human prejudices. However, when he got close, the army officer sent word that he was unworthy of having Jesus enter his home. Besides a personal feeling of unworthiness, the officer no doubt had in mind the discriminatory custom of the time that prohibited a Jew, like Jesus, from having social connections with non-Jews. So he asked, Would Jesus please just say the word for his servant to be healed?

This man's confidence in Jesus' powers—to heal even from a distance—amazed Jesus. At the same time, he was greatly moved by the man's humility. "I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "With no one in Israel have I found so great a faith." Then he said to the army officer: "Go. Just as it has been your faith, so let it come to pass for you." And the manservant was healed in that very hour. Jesus would willingly have gone into the non-Jew's house,

yet he acquiesced and, thereby, demonstrated that the officer's faith in his power was well founded.—Matt. 8:10, 13; Luke 7:1-10.

On another occasion, about a year later, Jesus traveled northward into Phoenicia, far beyond the borders of Palestine. There in the regions of Tyre and Sidon, "look! a Phoenician woman from those regions came out and cried aloud, saying: 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David. My daughter is badly demonized.'" Jesus' God-given assignment was to minister to Israelites or Jews, as he pointed out on this occasion: "I was not sent forth to any but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Nevertheless, he did not discriminate against this humble woman of faith, but said to her: "'O woman, great is your faith; let it happen to you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed from that hour on."—Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.

EXHORTATION TO IMITATE JESUS

Often Jesus' apostles exhorted others to imitate the fine example of their Master. For instance, in his letter to the congregation in ancient Rome, which was composed of Christians from different nationalities, the apostle Paul wrote: "Therefore welcome one another, just as the Christ also welcomed us, with glory to God in view. For I say that Christ actually became a minister of those who are circumcised [Jews] in behalf of God's truthfulness, so as to verify the promises He made to their forefathers, and that the nations might glorify God for his mercy."—Rom. 15:7-9.

Jehovah's witnesses who truly follow the example of Jesus Christ therefore do welcome people of all nationalities, treating them as equals. They imitate Jesus, who accepted people of all races and nationalities! But some persons may object, saying that Jesus showed partiality by de-

voting almost all his ministerial efforts toward members of his own race. Is this a Scriptural basis for our discriminating against other races or nationalities?

Not at all! Because of God's promises regarding the Kingdom seed to the Jewish forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it was necessary for Jesus to establish "God's truthfulness" as regards those promises by offering first to the natural Jews the opportunity to become part of the spiritual seed of Abraham. (Gen. 22: 17, 18; 26:3-5; 28:13, 14) That is why he ministered principally to the Jews and why, when he sent the twelve apostles out to preach, he told them not to go to non-Jews.—Matt. 10:5, 6.

Yet Jesus held no prejudice against others, as shown by his attitude toward the non-Jewish army officer and the Phoenician woman. He loved all peoples, regardless of race or nationality. Jesus realized that, in time, the message of salvation would go out to all. In fact, in parting from his disciples, he told them that they would be witnesses of him "in all the nations" and "to the most distant part of the earth."—Luke 24:45-48; Acts 1:8.

It was only three and a half years after his death and resurrection that the glorified Jesus welcomed the first of the uncircumcised non-Jews into his congregation. The convert was not a Greek, but an Italian—Cornelius by name. When the apostle Peter saw that God had listened to the prayer of this Gentile and had directed him to send for Peter, he exclaimed: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in *every nation* the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." If such peoples of all races and nationalities are acceptable to God and Christ, should they not be acceptable to us also?—Acts 10:34, 35; 17: 25, 26; Rom. 3:29.

EQUALITY FOR ALL—WHEN?

Because it is God's will, equality of rights and privileges for all races and nationalities is certain to be realized. However, it will not be as a result of any civil rights movement or present-day social reform. Prejudices and hatreds are too deeply engrained. Throughout human history man's attempts to eradicate them have miserably failed, and continue to fail. Understandably, some human observers feel inequalities are inevitable.

Yet what man has failed to do, God will soon accomplish. How so? First, by bringing about the destruction of this wicked system of things and preserving alive only prejudice-free servants of God into his new order. Then the promise of Jesus Christ, recorded in God's Word, will be fulfilled: "All those in the memorial tombs [regardless of race or nationality] will hear his voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) Under the righteous rule of God's kingdom these multiracial, multinational resurrected ones will learn to live with one another in peace, free from previous hatreds and strife.

That an administration operated in harmony with the principles of God's Word can bring about this effect is apparent by examining the present-day organization of Jehovah's witnesses. It is a matter of public record that Jehovah's witnesses *practice* brotherhood of all races and nationalities, and do not merely preach it. With genuine affection they call one another "Brother" or "Sister," and they also treat one another as equals. To obtain a foregleam of how equality for all will be realized in God's righteous new system of things, associate with the organization of Jehovah's witnesses and see it in practice today.

WORKING toward maturity is the most gratifying experience that a Christian can have. It is not an inherited quality, rather, it comes within the scope of Paul's words at Ephesians 4:12, 13 as being the result of training or building

up to reach full growth, the stature of a man: "Training . . . for the building up of the body of the Christ, . . . to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of growth that belongs to the fullness of the Christ." Attainment of this goal requires acquisition of knowledge, and that means study. Personal study is undoubtedly one of the most favored avenues through which an individual can acquire maturity. It is satisfying and joyful.

² Since we are to be Christlike, it means that the mind must be thoroughly nurtured on the proper spiritual food in order to develop the qualities that reflect maturity; such as devotion, love, perspective, faith, dependability and spiritual discernment. Building maturity constitutes a training program because it requires rigid exercise of the mental faculties. When the goal of Christian success is kept in mind, with the proper mental attitude, study is enjoyable.

1. How may we expect to acquire maturity?
2. (a) What qualities measure maturity? (b) And what effect will progress in this direction bring to the individual?

Gaining Maturity

THROUGH PERSONAL STUDY

is Joyful

"Wisdom...is good and is advantageous...
preserves alive its owner."
Eccl. 7:11, 12.

³ Some may find study tedious and difficult, but if this is the case, why not do something about it so it is no longer a drudgery; so it can be part of your everyday life, and enjoyed just as the

body enjoys taking in food? Others may

conclude, 'I'm just not a student; I don't really care about studying or reading.' Could this not be attributed, rather, to mental laziness? But again, even though eating may be a chore, would this one refrain from the effort and starve? Worthwhile ac-

complishments and especially those concerning everlasting life require effort—lots of effort, but the results are most gratifying, bringing contentment, peace and joy.

⁴ Many times the thought is expressed, 'I just don't have time to study.' You will not if you plan to do all other things first and then, if there is any time left, study. Do you treat eating the same way? Or do you take time to eat regularly? Certainly you do, and eating is delightful. You should train yourself to study and enjoy it just as you savor good food.

SUCCESS THROUGH STUDY

⁵ In any endeavor, it is the wish of an individual to be successful. Joshua was

3. (a) How may some look upon study? (b) Is the effort expended worthwhile?
4. Under what conditions may one not have enough time to study?
5. (a) How should a Christian measure success? (b) As shown at Proverbs 7:1, 2 and 1:5, 6, what should be our attitude toward understanding God's Word?

told regarding the "book of the law" that he should "read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely." (Josh. 1:8) Christian success is gained by doing that which is in accord with God's will. So, then, if one takes in knowledge regularly, he can expect to have that inward satisfaction that brings deep joy. It is most vital, then, that we highly treasure the commandments that Jehovah has given; 'we should treasure them and continue living.' Permitting our minds to dwell on this Scriptural expression brings our thoughts right back to study: "A wise person will listen and take in more instruction, and a man of understanding is the one who acquires skillful direction, to understand a proverb." To listen does not mean only to hear the voice of an individual and to take in knowledge through our sense of hearing. The same is true when we read and study the words from the printed page, information taken in through the sense of sight. In this way, too, we are "listening" to the author of the words and being taught. Thus we gradually gain understanding and progress toward maturity. —Prov. 7:1, 2; 1:5, 6.

^a A keen desire to search and dig for knowledge should be burning within us just as desire moves a prospector in pursuit of gold, as shown by the proverb: "If you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God." As a diamond has many facets, so there are many worthwhile aspects of learning to be gained from God's Word. We should feel inwardly as did the disciples of Jesus during the

seven-and-a-half-mile walk to Emmaus after Jesus had "interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures." They could not help but express themselves: "Were not our hearts burning as he was speaking to us on the road, as he was fully opening up the Scriptures to us?" This same burning or desire can be ours too, as we are brought into unity with God's congregation through study; and a keen awareness of pleasing God on our part certainly contributes to our joy.—Prov. 2:4, 5; Luke 24:13, 27, 32; Rom. 11:33.

MEDITATION

^a Meditation by a person results in improvement of the mind. Would not this come within the scope of the words of Paul: "Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons. Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching"? (1 Tim. 4:15, 16) Meditation is not daydreaming or letting the mind just wander aimlessly, but, rather, it is bridled thought upon a specific subject. For instance, by considering prophecies that point to the all-important date of 1914, one might catalog in his mind the scriptures that point to it and call to mind all that he possibly can. This would be rewarding and stimulating and would all come within the category of personal study. David expressed it well in these words: "I shall certainly meditate on all your activity, and with your dealings I will concern myself." (Ps. 77:12) Under certain circumstances, that may be the only manner in which one could carry on personal study if incarcerated and being denied a Bible or communication with others. Meditation under such circum-

6. (a) What effort should be put forth to gain knowledge? (b) What was the feeling of the disciples when Jesus explained scriptures concerning himself?

7. (a) What is meditation, and how may it be employed? (b) Under what conditions may it be the only way of maintaining a healthy spirit?

stances would be vital to keep oneself healthy spiritually, and would lead to maturity.

DISPEL PREOCCUPATION OF MIND

⁸ In personal study, it is important that the individual clear the mind of preoccupation with other thoughts, to enable one to concentrate and to be single-minded relative to the matter at hand; and, when one is reading the Bible, God's Word, "give constant thought" to it. Then "the Lord will really give you discernment in all things." Spiritual perception is a progressive step toward maturity. In that way Jehovah will aid you to "treasure up practical wisdom; . . . and he will guard the very way of his loyal ones." Consequently, we should pursue spiritual adulthood by keeping the mind alert, vigorous and active, just as an athlete trains his body. —2 Tim. 2:7; Prov. 2:7, 8.

⁹ But how often when we sit down to study we find our minds still racing over various activities of the day. We may still be keyed up over some happening in our secular work, or upset over some incident of the day. We may sit down to study *The Watchtower*. We read a moment and then think, 'What did I read in that paragraph?' We must get other matters off our minds as we study specific subjects. It is true our minds can be sidetracked by the prevalencies of the day, but this only hinders study and its joy. On the other hand, we do not want to be so relaxed that we become drowsy after reading one paragraph.

MATERIAL SOURCES

¹⁰ There are many sources that are valuable aids in working toward personal maturity. Some of the principal sources are

8. What is necessary to make study effective?
9. What may interfere with retaining what we read or study?
10. What varied sources of material are there, and how should they be used?

the study articles in each issue of *The Watchtower*. But there are also short articles and questions that are most valuable to us. Do we neglect these? Or do we only surface-read them? Do we pay attention to the theme? After we have studied any article, do we remember the important points, and can we recall the scriptures emphasized? If counsel to Christian ministers is given through its pages, do we accept the counsel and make personal application? Do God's thoughts as expressed in *The Watchtower* portray your confidence? The psalmist stated: "You will cause me to know the path of life." (Ps. 16:11) Does this mirror your attitude? If so, then God's thoughts are molding your thoughts. What about the journal *Awake!*? Do you read it and benefit from its diversified instruction? Do you study the other Watch Tower publications? The *Yearbook*, current books? And do you refer to and use other Bible helps? They can be very valuable in developing a background and can be a source for personal study, considering all this in the light of theocratic thinking. Bible concordances are also valuable for research work, particularly if you are studying topically. The Watch Tower Society's topical index of all its publications since 1930 is most useful for locating material in personal study. Topical reviewing is most beneficial. For example, if one wants to look up "reviewing" in the index, one would find information on it in the 1962 *Watchtower*, pages 499 and 527. In considering the thought of acquiring information, one might look up the value of memory in personal study. Source information there will refer to the book *Qualified to Be Ministers*, pages 151 and 152.

¹¹ In studying, the acquisition of infor-

11. (a) How effective will our studying be? (b) How often should we study the Bible, and what will be effective?

mation will be in direct proportion to the amount of time and effort put into study. If one is diligent in school study of arithmetic for eight years in one's secular school courses, much knowledge will be accrued. By having subjected the mind diligently for the duration of this arithmetic course, one will come out much more qualified than those who "coast" along. The same is true with the student of the Bible. Yes, the student that sows bountifully in time will reap bountifully of spiritual riches. Obviously, it is most advantageous to buy out opportune time for Bible study. The best way to do this is by setting aside time regularly for it. Reading God's Word the Bible is what Jehovah's witnesses seek to do themselves and invite others to do daily.

VALUE OF GOD'S WORD

¹² In reading the Bible, our thinking acquiesces to the thoughts of wise men who are noted for integrity. It is advantageous to let them impart information to us. It goes even beyond receiving instructions from individuals. The Bible is a product of the inspiration of Jehovah God and, when we read it, we are actually "listening" to Him. How could we spend time more advantageously? Immediately this shows how we need to guard ourselves against a passive mind. We "go on walking in union with him [Christ], rooted and being built up in him and being stabilized in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with faith in thanksgiving." This gives us a marvelous safeguard against the flood of propaganda and time-consuming and deceptive knowledge of this world, which is foolishness with God. This counsel of Paul to the Colossians continues: "Look out: perhaps there may be some-

one who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ." Yes, there is a superabundance of deceptive information upon which those of this world are feeding their minds, and Bible study is a precautionary measure so we are not swept into this same current that leads to sorrow, distress and disaster. In this same letter, Paul prayed for others, that they might be filled with this accurate knowledge, as recorded at chapter one, verses 9 and 10. Now listen to Paul talk to you: "We . . . have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual discernment, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him as you go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God."—Col. 2:6-10.

¹³ To gain understanding is exhilarating. It brings joy to the Christian heart and is refreshing as waters upon vegetation, as shown by Deuteronomy 32:2, which states: "As gentle rains upon grass and as copious showers upon vegetation." This produces good growth. With joy come contentment and tranquillity, qualities that are looked upon with great eagerness and desire by all people. In other words, to be free of anxieties, stresses of this world. Jesus qualified this very well when he stated: "If you remain in my word, . . . you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31, 32) This is the happiness that one gains only through the progressive advancement to Christian maturity.

12. (a) Why is the Bible so valuable to us? (b) What benefits are derived by "listening" to Paul in his counsel to the Colossians?

13. What satisfaction will one derive from gaining understanding?

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

¹⁴ An individual may be overwhelmed by the statement, "Study the Bible." The initial thought coming to mind is, "Where should I start?" First of all, it might be said that if you have not read the Bible straight through from beginning to end, this is an excellent place to start. It will give you a more comprehensive understanding of events as they have occurred.

¹⁵ But perhaps the most beneficial method of Bible study is the topical one, that is, by subject. One might try to live an event or an occurrence as he reads and, by doing so, the mind will grasp the picture much more readily. Endeavoring to visualize the situation will help you to understand the picture or understand the event more comprehensively. Think of the crucial night, after sundown, Nisan 14, in 1513 B.C.E. There is a cloudless sky and the moon is full. You see an Israelite father, his family assisting, slaughtering a lamb, an unblemished creature not over one year old. The blood is caught in a basin, splashed on the side post and lintel only of the door of their home. The streets are empty, the doors shut. Think too of the feeling of an Egyptian walking through one of these quiet, deserted streets in Goshen that night, and observe the blood dripping from the doorposts. Inside are the families eating the lamb, herbs and unleavened bread. At this time they are not reclining at the table; they are standing erect, loins girded, staff in hand, fully shod, ready to move at a moment's notice. Midnight approaches; there is danger out in the streets of Egypt. What frantic cries soon rise from the homes of the Egyptians throughout the land as the firstborn are killed! Yes, the pride of the land, all the firstborn both of humans,

starting with the king's son, and of the animals.

¹⁶ Quickly now after midnight the Israelites move out. Think of it! Several million of them, with no confusion, no wild rout, no one trampled underfoot or crushed in the rush to escape from the land of Goshen. Old men, young men, old women, young women, even little children and babes in arms. What a scene this is! An army of people on the move, escaping bondage under the Egyptians, and now being liberated from it by the hand of Jehovah! Let this become a living reality as you read Exodus chapters 11 to 15. The whole picture unfolds vividly.

¹⁷ Similarly, one can take up and read of the destruction of Babylon on that night of the rollicking festival of the king, and then the awestricken atmosphere when the handwriting on the wall was interpreted by Daniel and he told of the imminent destruction ahead. The onslaught of the Median and Persian armies came in through the open doors of the city, ransacked and seized control of it. (Daniel 5) Our having these pictures live in our minds will be most helpful in studying this destruction of Babylon.

USING TIME AND EFFORT ADVANTAGEOUSLY

¹⁸ There are so many things that one can do with time, and it is important that time be guarded carefully so that it is used advantageously, not wasted. We can see the importance of budgeting it so that important things will not be crowded out. Take, for example, the Christian minister that works forty hours a week for the support of his family. His time is budgeted rigidly by his employer, who sets aside those eight hours each day for five days every single week, regularly, without any

14. What is one way to study the Bible?

15, 16. (a) Why is the topical method of study beneficial? (b) Why will attempting to visualize a situation help one to remember? Show this by illustration.

17. What will help us to remember the destruction of Babylon as recorded at Daniel chapter 5?

18. (a) What will help us to get more value from our study time? (b) What brings the greatest satisfaction and joy?

breaks in it. What about the times we set aside for personal study? Is it not just as important to maintain our intake of spiritual nutrition by regularly reading and studying the Bible? This regularity cannot be overemphasized when it comes to peering into the perfect law, as James admonished: "But he who peers into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and who persists in it, this man, because he has become, not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, will be happy in his doing it." (Jas. 1:25) Actual satisfaction and joy will become one's possession by persistently acquiring information, if one is not a forgetful hearer, and one will advance to maturity. Happiness does not only come with acquisition of knowledge, but comes by also being able to tell others so they too can share the same gladness of heart. Sharing happiness brings more happiness, just as the reward for good works is more work and responsibility for the Christian minister.

MATURITY—A LIFETIME GOAL

¹⁹ The steady diet of personal study enhances one's ability to understand clearly, and that matures the individual. Budgeting of time includes making time to speak truth to others. Notice what Paul says about speaking the truth at Ephesians 4:15, when he writes: "Speaking the truth, let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ." When we are speaking the truth and explaining a point of God's Word to someone else, it is interesting to note how that matures the thought and depth of appreciation of that particular subject in one's own mind. Have you ever noticed how much better you retain the thoughts of any given *Watchtower* study when you have made comment on a particular paragraph? That

thought is embedded in your mind much more deeply than even by listening to others comment. Obviously, through the latter we benefit too, but not nearly so much as when we talk, or express ourselves on the subject. This can be illustrated very well in the Theocratic Ministry School when a mature minister delivers a talk on one of the books of the Bible. It will be very beneficial to the listeners, but the speaker will have it much more indelibly fixed in his mind because he will have gone over it thoroughly and, through intensive practice, made it his own. Many times you have heard the expression after such a talk, 'My, I wish I knew every book of the Bible as well as the one book upon which I have given a talk.' The extra effort put forth in study, practice and imparting information to others is valuable as another stepping-stone to maturity.

²⁰ We all readily recognize the maturity of the apostle Paul, but even then the thoughts that he expressed to the Philippians illustrated that he had not reached the zenith. He related how it is a continuous, progressive process: "I do not yet consider myself as having laid hold of it; but there is one thing about it: Forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things ahead, I am pursuing down toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God by means of Christ Jesus. Let us, then, as many of us as are mature, be of this mental attitude; and if you are mentally inclined otherwise in any respect, God will reveal the above attitude to you. At any rate, to what extent we have made progress, let us go on walking orderly in this same routine." (Phil. 3:13-16) Yes, maturity is a lifetime proposition. Just for an example, we see a young man who has applied his mind diligently

19. (a) What will aid our progress toward maturity? (b) What examples illustrate means of developing maturity?

20. (a) What did Paul consider the amount of progress in his pursuit of his goal, and what suggestion did he offer for others? (b) How can one advance to maturity with years? and with what result?

through his adolescent years and has studied carefully until the time he is thirty. He has acquired a great deal of knowledge through personal study up till this time. He may be considered a mature man; he may be a circuit or district overseer, or have an overseership in one of the branch offices. But let that man continue to study another ten years, and then see how much more he has gained by the time he is

forty. If he continues the same procedure for another ten years, just think how much more progress he will have made at fifty, and then sixty years of age. Along with this maturing process, which is a lifetime job, his joy grows and his appreciation and satisfaction increase, and the same is true of anyone who studies diligently and never relents. He can reach the position of a "full-grown man."

POSSESSING mature thinking and judgment is of great value to the person who seeks to do God's will, enabling him to thwart the continual bombardment of temptations that are constantly striking him in this old order of things. The threats to Christian integrity in these wicked days at the end of this system of things are materialism, backbiting, reviling, extortion, immorality and misuse of blood. The rising emotional floods of nationalism bring increased political demands on the Christian to direct his worship to national standards and his loyalty and life to the State. In addition to this, there is the barrage of commercial inducements to seek a life of ease, luxury, to trust in materialism, to make money rapidly by sharp practices, on the borderline between legality and outright cheating. The question immediately arises, "What will be my decision when

Exercising Maturity

-A SAFEGUARD

"You will walk in security on your way, and even your foot will not strike against anything . . . For Jehovah himself will prove to be, in effect, your confidence, and he will certainly keep your foot against capture."—Prov. 3:23-26.

world, love and obedience to Jehovah are vitally essential. Continually wanting to come into harmony with Jehovah's Word will constitute a safeguard. One's thinking ability has been enhanced by continual study and advancement to maturity. It "will keep guard over you."—John 14:15; Prov. 2:11.

³ Exercising maturity will be a safe-

these temptations confront me?" Does the one giving thought to these matters always know what he would do, or, at times, are there some doubts in his mind, be they ever so small?

² In view of the pressures we must endure, it is necessary to use every faculty to maintain integrity. Jesus showed this principle in these words: "If you love me, you will observe my commandments." Obviously, then, to overcome temptations of the

1. Why is mature thinking and judgment of such great value to us today, and what will it enable us to do?

2. How will observance of Jesus' words at John 14:15 'keep guard over us'?

3. (a) Why is study so vital throughout our entire lives? (b) Why is it so urgent now?

guard if we continue acquiring accurate knowledge, analyze it and compare it with what we already know, drawing proper conclusions from this analysis, storing it up in our memory and putting it all into practical use at the proper time. Can we not, therefore, readily see the importance of continual study throughout our lives? Yes, our thinking and decisions are conditioned on such knowledge and wisdom. How apropos are Jehovah's words of counsel given to safeguard us, as illustrated in these words: "My son, to my wisdom O do pay attention. To my discernment incline your ears, so as to guard thinking abilities; and may your own lips safeguard knowledge itself"! (Prov. 5:1, 2) This brings us back to the importance of the thought that we should safeguard practical wisdom; and notice how valuable this is, as stated in Proverbs 3:21, 22: "Safeguard practical wisdom and thinking ability, and they will prove to be life to your soul and charm to your throat." Cultivating and developing thinking ability develops maturity, and it is important that this be done now, rather than to wait until a crucial moment demands a vital decision.

⁴ If as parents, for example, we are pressured by a doctor and family members who do not have accurate knowledge, to permit a blood transfusion, stating that the child's life depends on it, can we make the proper decision at that time and give a reason for it? Or will we have to say, "I don't have the proper explanation just now, but I'll read up on the subject and advise"? It is important that under such times of harassment one never discounts the power of emotion to becloud mature thinking. Mature judgment can be exercised only when the mind can clearly analyze the problem or situation, draw

sober conclusions and reach decisions unfettered and unhampered by outside influence. Through prior study we will have God's mind on the matter in harmony with his spirit, and a resolve should be made to carry out God's will, come what may. Let the waves of emotions of others dash themselves in vain against the rocklike structure of your faith!

CREATURE WORSHIP—IDOLATRY

⁵ Thinking on divine principles will help to meet situations as they come up during one's lifetime. You will know why the course is right or wrong. But suppose circumstances may be somewhat different. Take, for example, doing acts of worship before symbols. Immediately scriptures such as 1 John 5:21 come to mind: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols," and Jehovah's words in the Decalogue: "You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form that is like anything that is in the heavens above or that is on the earth underneath or that is in the waters under the earth." Diagnosing the matter, then, what is an idol? What is idolatry? We see that an idol can be an image or symbol of anything created. Do not national emblems have symbols on them? Stars? Animals? Colors that represent qualities? Do not they stand for what Peter referred to as "every human creation"? May they be revered? Jehovah's own words answer: "You must not bow down to them nor be induced to serve them, because I Jehovah your God am a God exacting exclusive devotion." Therefore, bowing down would be an act of worship. Is the principle any different if some other motion is indulged in? Is standing up when a patriotic song is sung any different from bowing down when an idol passes? Or removing the hat? Or extend-

4. How will prior study help us under trying conditions to make decisions based on right conclusions and not sentiment?

5. What circumstances could arise that lead to compromise in an idolatrous act?

ing the hand or putting the hand over the heart?—Ex. 20:4, 5; 1 Pet. 2:13.

⁶ But yet, what is so bad about it? Well, bear in mind that Jehovah says he exacts exclusive devotion, and this is all due propriety. Remember, Jehovah is our Judge, Lawgiver and King. (Isa. 33:22) His jurisdiction embodies the entire government of the universe. Therefore, to do an act of worship to any other personage or thing created would be idolatry. We can readily see why Satan would have been most satisfied and triumphant with just one small act of worship from Jesus. (Matt. 4:9, 10) Such would be treason and deserving of death. This is universally recognized, even among the nations. How much worse, then, is treason that brings into jeopardy the eternal life of others and dishonors Jehovah! If confronted with such a compromising situation when commanded to worship (salute) some national emblem or commit an act of obeisance, one may take immediate comfort from Jesus' words at Matthew 10:28, when he said: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." Let mature judgment safeguard your life by recognizing that you will encounter many trials and tribulations, and it could mean death, as shown in Revelation 2:10, where we are admonished: "Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life." It is true that men and nations could take away your life now, but can they give it back to you? Can they give you everlasting life? Can they prevent Jehovah from giving you life? Because we are in a position and have opportunity to acquire mature judgment, embedding it deeply in our minds and hearts at this time, let it be so strongly

entrenched that, on our part, it will develop a hatred toward any act of disobedience or treason against Jehovah.

ABSTAINING FROM BLOOD

⁷ In the matter of blood, we must start basically at the initial pronouncement against it, where eating blood was forbidden to mankind. (Gen. 9:4) Jews were prohibited from eating the blood of any sort from any flesh. (Lev. 17:14) Probably the strongest expression was given to the Christians at Acts 15:29, where the unequivocal statement is made: "Keep yourselves free . . . from blood." But without having full knowledge of such a statement as this, the average individual might possibly reason, "Wouldn't it be all right to sacrifice just a little of one's blood to preserve the life of another, especially if the one in need is one's own flesh and blood?" No, because this goes against another Bible principle that Jehovah stated through his prophet Samuel: "To obey is better than a sacrifice." (1 Sam. 15:22) Add to this the fact that rebelliousness and presumptuousness are as bad as using divination, uncanny power and teraphim. The unacquainted mind might say, "Well, that would be saving a life." But is it really, when we resort to sober mature thinking and principle? By full and complete obedience, our souls and those of our children are preserved to everlasting life. It goes without saying that we love our children, and true love works to their best interest. Certainly one would never jeopardize one's own child's hope for everlasting life by compromising with worldly principles or by sentimentality! No, Jesus' words at Matthew 10:37 apply here, when he stated: "He that has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not

6. (a) What, basically, constitutes idolatry? Why is such equivalent to treason? (b) Why should we not fear man or earthly governments?

7. (a) What does God's Word have to say regarding the use of blood? (b) How should one reason on the use of blood when one's own children are involved? (c) Why should the misuse of blood be repulsive to a Christian?

worthy of me; and he that has greater affection for son or daughter than for me is not worthy of me." So, then, is it best for you and your child to have a few short years of life now, or eternal life in the new order of things? Weigh the alternatives, then make your decision. Are you one to whom disobeying God's law is repulsive? Then the taking of blood is just as despicable to you as cannibalism. Think of eating of the flesh of another human creature! It is shocking! Is drinking human blood any different? Does bypassing the mouth and putting it directly into the veins change it? Not at all!

MATURITY AND IMMATURITY

⁸ We might look to the example of David, who was acquainted with God's law on blood and analyzed it, and he came to the conclusion that he would not consider even a seeming violation of God's law. This is told to us at 1 Chronicles 11:19: "It is unthinkable on my part, as regards my God, to do this! Is it the blood of these men that I should drink at the risk of their souls? For it was at the risk of their souls that they brought it." Again, mature judgment was a safeguard to David.

⁹ It may be well for us to consider another occasion concerning David, when his decision was not predicated on mature thinking, when he let physical passion overshadow and dim mature judgment. Looking too long at an attractive woman, Bath-sheba, led him into a course of direct violation of the Seventh Commandment, forbidding adultery. Apparently he had not given the same careful thought in this case as he did in the previous one. Here is an instance where David was overreached by personal desire, and there is little question of David's having had knowledge that adulterous violators were

to be stoned to death.—2 Sam. 11:2-5.

¹⁰ The same Bible principle is held out to Christians today, inasmuch as at 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 it states: 'Adulterers . . . will not inherit God's kingdom.' In actuality, they must be expelled (disfellowshipped and put in a deathlike condition) from the Christian congregation. Prohibition of fornication was one of the requirements for Gentile believers as well, as Paul admonishes against fornication and adultery. Some people exercise immature judgment by consoling their own consciences in such thoughts as, "It doesn't really hurt anybody, does it?" "Isn't it rather extreme to stone people to death just for doing what comes naturally?"

¹¹ By proper enlightenment through careful study one will recognize that Jehovah's purpose for sexual relationship was to transmit life, under the marriage arrangement of parents, who were to provide security for proper growth, development and education for their offspring. Children reared outside this arrangement suffer because of being born outside the divine pattern. It must be recognized, then, that by applying the perfect standard of justice, sexual immorality is a perversion or wrong and receives God's adverse judgment.

¹² A good example of immaturity was the nation of Israel who fell away, from time to time, to outright, bald-faced, unquestioned idolatry. They just did not think. Is not that the most usual reason when we get into trouble? We just do not think. If we do not think before acting, very likely we will think regretfully afterward. Hosea rebuked the Israelites with the words of Jehovah: "Because the knowledge is what you yourself have re-

8. How did David view drinking water when men risked their lives to procure it for him?

9. On what occasion did David show immature judgment?

10. (a) What is the penalty for Christians if they commit adultery (or fornication) today? (b) How may some immature person save his conscience?

11. What is Jehovah's purpose for sexual relationship, and when is it proper?

12. What happened to Israel regarding idolatry? Why?

jected, I shall also reject you from serving as a priest to me; and because you keep forgetting the law of your God, I shall forget your sons, even I." (Hos. 4:6) Where there is lack of knowledge, the retrospect of a creature will not safeguard him, but, rather, lead him into wrongdoing. Either they did not take in right knowledge for a safeguard or they did not keep it in memory.

¹³ Splendid examples of those who took the wise course were the three companions of Daniel. Maturity of thought is illustrated to us in Daniel 1:4, as Nebuchadnezzar asked that a search be made for captives "having insight into all wisdom and being acquainted with knowledge, and having discernment of what is known." Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego qualified as men of mature thought. This is what gave them strength under later temptations. In fact, when severe pressure was brought upon them to bow to a political image on the plain of Dura, their mature answer to Nebuchadnezzar was manifested when they declared: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are under no necessity in this regard to say back a word to you. 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." Notice their continuation of expression: "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." Of course, we know the thrilling outcome in the miraculous deliverance from the fiery furnace that was theirs.—Daniel 3.

¹⁴ Daniel was also adamant in his thinking. He did not wait until he was confronted with temptation, because the founda-

tion of his decision was made ahead of time, as noted at Daniel 1:8: "But Daniel determined in his heart that he would not pollute himself with the delicacies of the king and with his drinking wine. And he kept requesting of the principal court-official that he might not pollute himself." Even though Darius signed the edict that whoever would petition (pray to) another for thirty days would be thrown into the lions' pit, Daniel continued praying to his God three times a day as had been customary for him. Such faithfulness was recompensed by Jehovah with His closing the mouth of the lions.—Dan. 6:7-22.

¹⁵ On one occasion Saul was intent upon attacking the Philistines. He waited seven days for Samuel to come up and offer burnt sacrifice and communion sacrifices and, when he failed to show patience, he said: "'Bring near to me the burnt sacrifice and the communion sacrifices.' With that he went offering up the burnt sacrifice." He did not continue to wait upon the Lord. What a lamentable thing it is to rely upon one's own judgment, which is so shallow compared to the instruction of Jehovah! When Samuel approached him then, he said: "You have acted foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of Jehovah your God. . . . And now your kingdom will not last." The record continues: "Jehovah will certainly find for himself a man agreeable to his heart; and Jehovah will commission him as a leader over his people, because you did not keep what Jehovah commanded you."—1 Sam. 13:9, 13, 14.

¹⁶ In contrast, notice the mature thinking of another man, one that obeyed God's command even though it meant the life of his son, in whom all his hopes rested. Yes, God commanded Abraham actually to sac-

13. Describe the maturity of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

14. How did Daniel manifest his maturity on two occasions?

15. How did Saul demonstrate a lack of mature judgment? With what ultimate result?

16. Describe how Abraham displayed mature judgment and utmost faith in Jehovah.

rifice his own son. This is something that Jehovah has never commanded another man to do, before or since. Abraham had all confidence in Almighty God and his purposes. The covenant that Jehovah had made with him was burned indelibly in his memory, and he KNEW that the blessing of all nations was to come through his son Isaac. Abraham was prepared to carry out the instruction to kill the only one through whom the seed of promise could come. There was only one possible conclusion that Abraham could have drawn from this reasoning. Had he carried through and killed his son, it is stated at Hebrews 11:19: "he reckoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; and from there he did receive him also in an illustrative way."

¹⁷ Another classic example of those who disregarded the counsel of God by thinking as natural men to the point of despising God's law was the case of the two sons of the high priest Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. Not only were they greedily taking the best of the sacrifices for themselves, but they committed adultery with the women who served at the tabernacle. They were overreached by their own selfish desires, disregarding Jehovah's laws and not thinking about Jehovah. Jehovah was thinking of them and observed their conduct and compared it with his righteous law. He came to this conclusion in regard to their continuing on as priests and producing offspring to serve as priests: "It is unthinkable, on my part, because those honoring me I shall honor, and those despising me will be of little account." Jehovah remembered this decision regarding them, and they died in battle as a divine judgment.—1 Sam. 2: 22-26, 30, 34; 4:11.

17. How did Eli's sons manifest complete disregard for Jehovah's Word? With what results to them?

¹⁸ There was an occasion where a young man was most cognizant of Jehovah's law and principles because as a youth he had a knowledge of the right moral standards of Jehovah. His mature judgment safeguarded him from committing immorality when tempted by the enticements of Potiphar's wife, who repeatedly invited Joseph to commit fornication when she asked him to "lie down with me." His decision was made in these words: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" His reaction? Joseph "left his garment in her hand and took to flight and went on outside." He would rather spend years in prison, charged with what he refused to do, than violate the dictates of his decision to be faithful to God's requirements. (Gen. 39:7, 9, 10, 12) Joseph was actually committed to prison under false charges placed against him. As a result of his uncompromising stand he was used as a provider for his people. Faithfulness under this trial was a requisite for such approval.

CONCLUSION

¹⁹ It is certainly discernible that theocratically trained minds will render like judgment and will not let down guard and fall into the error of sin leading to pain, sorrow, suffering and eternal death. Why not let our course imitate that of faithful men who protected and guarded their souls carefully and remained in the favor of Almighty God even under trial? Maintaining integrity to God constitutes a safeguard of life. The joys and blessings of obedience bring security, contentment and self-sufficiency. Yes, it will enable one to build up a powerful shield of faith, as Paul described: "Above all things, take up the

18. What tempting situation confronted Joseph, and what resulted to him immediately, and ultimately, for maintaining integrity?

19. (a) Whose course should we imitate for protection? (b) How will maturity protect us even under trying circumstances?

large shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the wicked one's burning missiles." Even though Satan may take away all our literature and even our Bible and put us into solitary confinement or subject us to vicious persecution, we will have a protection that he cannot penetrate. If we have taken in complete and accurate knowledge of Jehovah's purposes as found in the sacred Word the Bible, if we have compared and analyzed it carefully with the help of mature brothers in association with the congregation, if we make decisions in advance on what to do under the varying circumstances that may

come upon us, if we recall them and make practical decisions, we will safeguard ourselves against temptations that confront us continually.—Eph. 6:16.

²⁰ How true is the proverb that tells us to depend always on Jehovah, as stated in Proverbs, chapter 3, verses 5 and 6: "Do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight"! Wisely, then, put all your faith and trust in Jehovah, predicated upon mature judgment. This will guard you, and Jehovah himself will be your everlasting shield.

20. What will provide our everlasting safeguard?



Maintaining Worship at "the House of Our God"

HOW prone the fallen human flesh is to give in to materialism and to overlook the spiritual interests and benefits and thus fall into neglecting Jehovah's house, as did the Jews in Nehemiah's day! Helping to guard us against making that mistake is our theme for July, "Maintaining Worship at 'the House of Our God.'"—Neh. 10:39.*

Of course, strictly speaking, "the house of our God" now is the Christian congregation, of which just a "remnant" remains until the present time. (Eph. 2:19-22) But in association with the remnant are a "great crowd" of whom the apostle John wrote that "they are rendering [God] sacred service day and night in his temple." (Rev. 7:15) Maintaining worship at "the house of our God" would therefore mean associating in the worship carried on by the local Christian congregation that is under the direction of the remnant, as represented by the "faithful and discreet slave."—Matt. 24:45-47.

How do Christians individually share in maintaining this worship at "the house of our God"? First of all, by attending all the

congregational meetings faithfully each week, not being easily discouraged from doing so by obstacles. More than that, by preparing for such meetings and then sharing in the worship by joining in song and offering comments as opportunity affords. Included, naturally, would be praying for God's house, that he might bless it, prosper it and keep it pure.

Additionally, Christians can share in maintaining the worship at God's house by contributing toward the expense involved in the upkeep of Kingdom Halls, of which there are upward of 24,000 throughout the world; thereby helping to pay for the rent, light and heating bills, and so forth. And there is also the matter of keeping the Kingdom Hall presentable, free from dust and dirt.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that "the house of our God" is the center of the preaching activity, for the offering up of sacrifices of praise. To maintain its worship, therefore, would include going from house to house and in other ways preaching the good news of God's kingdom. In all such ways true Christians can be doing their share to maintain worship at God's house, to his glory and to their own everlasting welfare.—Heb. 13:15.

* For details see *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1965.

TRAMPLING OUT the Grapes of Wrath



A YOUNG man, a vigorous active participant in athletics, noticed one day that he had a feeling of tiredness. This was a new experience for him, for heretofore he had always been full of energy. As the days went on this became more and more noticeable. Attributing it to a certain lack of something in his system, he began to take vitamins. This seemed to help a little but he noticed later on that not only did he still have a rather exhausted feeling at times but he knew he was also losing weight. Mildly alarmed, he visited his doctor, who gave him a routine examination and prescribed more rest and a tonic. The symptoms continued to persist and the man went to several doctors and was given several different forms of treatment, but his weight loss continued and he began to be really sick. Nothing he tried seemed to give anything more than a slight, temporary help. Finally he was admitted to a complete examination, which included X rays and a series of other tests. On returning to the clinic he could sense something serious as he was ushered into the doctor's office, where the dreadful news was broken to him: the tests revealed that he had cancer. He had progressed to the point, said the doctor, that a serious operation would be required. The success of the operation depended

upon the extent to which the cancer could be removed. The operation would succeed if every last bit of the tentacles of the cancer could be cut out. The operation would be serious and trialsome, but it was urgent and absolutely imperative for survival.

The world today is like the young man. It is sick. Everywhere hatred, fear, distrust, distress and suspicion stalk. Blame for the condition is placed sometimes on individuals such as dictators, on ideologies such as communism or capitalism. Likewise, different individuals, especially political leaders, are looked to as the remedy. Some men devote their lives to causes and movements that they believe will cure the world of its deadly malady. But these people do not see the world as God, its Creator, sees it and they overlook one very important fact, of which his Word the Bible informs us. That is, that there is a malignant growth in the earth, the tentacles of which reach out and affect every feature of mankind's activity. Until it is rooted out, including every last vestige of its tentacles, mankind cannot have a condition of health spiritually, mentally and morally, nor the peace and happy relationships with one another that all honest-hearted persons desire.

The Bible describes the thing causing

the sickness in the earth as a vine, rooted in the earth and producing a corrupt fruitage that has resulted in the oppression of mankind and has made the earth very sick. It shows that until this vine is cut down and threshed and trampled out thoroughly so that it can no more take root in the earth, the treatments given for earth's sickness, including all the various movements, ideologies and efforts will be to no avail. What is this vine? When was it planted? What fruitage does it produce? When and how will it be cut down and trampled out? It is important for us to know the answers to these questions so as to know how to direct our energies and pattern our lives, for, otherwise, all efforts will be directed aimlessly and will result in disappointment and frustration, with our life's energies wasted on lost causes.

BEYOND MAN'S POWER

But you may say, Cannot man deal with this vine of the earth and cut it down? No! for in the book of Revelation Jesus Christ gave the apostle John a preview of things to come in our time—the harvesting of the earth, the gathering of the true worshipers of God to a place of God's favor and protection and the destruction of the “vine of the earth”—and revealed that the immensity of the job is such that only mighty angelic creatures serving under Christ's direction can handle it.

Revelation, chapter 14, depicts a work being done by angels under Christ Jesus during this time of the end. It states (vss. 17, 18): “And still another angel [the fifth one in this series] emerged from the temple sanctuary that is in heaven [therefore a worshiper of Jehovah as God], he, too, having a sharp sickle. And still another angel [the sixth] emerged from the altar and he had authority over the fire. And he called out with a loud voice to the one

that had the sharp sickle, saying: ‘Put your sharp sickle in and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, because its grapes have become ripe.’”

SYMBOLIC USE OF THE WORD “VINE”

What this “vine of the earth” is can be understood by examining other scriptures where a vine is used in a symbolic sense. God organized Israel into a nation, gave them a government and planted them in the land of Palestine. He says at Jeremiah 2:21: “And as for me, I had planted you as a choice red vine, all of it a true seed. So how have you been changed toward me into the degenerate shoots of a foreign vine?” At Isaiah 5:7, he says: “For the vineyard of Jehovah of armies is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the plantation of which he was fond. And he kept hoping for judgment, but, look! the breaking of law; for righteousness, but, look! an outcry.” Here the nation of Israel was considered as Jehovah's vine and it was planted right and began to be good but finally turned out to produce bad fruitage. The nation became very sick spiritually and morally. When Jesus came to earth this vine produced such corrupt fruit that its leaders and many of its people were moved to destroy him. Jesus began gathering out those who would become his spiritual brothers and he spoke of himself as a vine and the ones making up spiritual Israel, the 144,000 spiritual Israelites, as branches in it. This vine was to be composed of the “little flock” to whom it was the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom of God. So this “true vine” is the nation of spiritual Israel that produces the fruits of the kingdom of God.—John 15:1-8; Luke 12:32; Matt. 21:43.

Now the fruitage this good vine produces is listed at Galatians 5:22, 23, namely, love, joy, peace, long-suffering,

kindness, goodness, faith, mildness and self-control. These things work to the good of all who come into contact with the true, spiritual vine. This vine was planted by Jehovah God in the first century and, being a spiritual vine, will constitute the kingdom of God, ruling from heaven. It will bring blessings of life and everlasting happiness to the peoples of the earth.

FRUITAGE OF THE "VINE OF THE EARTH"

The "vine of the earth," which is to be cut down by God's angels, must be something opposed to Jehovah God and, therefore, must be a product of his enemy Satan the Devil. It has to be cut down because the fruitage it produces is bad.

We know that Satan the Devil is the god and ruler of the worldly kingdoms and it is from Satan that these kingdoms get their power, thrones and great authority. (Rev. 13:1, 2; Matt. 4:8, 9; Luke 4:5, 6; John 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4) These nations belong to Satan just as Israel belonged to Jehovah God. Therefore, the "vine of the earth" is the *Devil's visible system of government over mankind*. It was planted by means of Nimrod the mighty hunter twenty-two centuries before the Common Era. It has always been opposed to God and has produced much fruit.

There is a reason why the fruit of the "vine of the earth" is bad in the extreme. It is this: In producing its fruit the vine has been aided, yes, goaded by Babylon the Great, which reigns as a great false religious empire over all the kingdoms under Satan. (Rev. 17:1-5; chap. 18) Therefore, all its fruitage is of the most corrupt kind, against God and very degrading, resulting in much oppression of the people. Its fruitage is described in Ga-

latians 5:19-21, as follows: fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, idolatry, practice of spiritism, hatred, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions, sects, envies, drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these. So this vine has produced the fruitage of "all the kingdoms of the world" and its fruitage has resulted in making the earth drunk with devastating wars, oppressions, fear, crime, hatred, strifes and murders. Millions have gone into their graves in an untimely death because of the selfish, greedy ambitions

of vicious rulers in all the seven world powers to date. The ambitions of men like Hitler and others for world domination have dealt a terrible toll, increas-

ing the sickness that the malignant vine promotes.

God has let this vine grow, especially until the end of the Gentile Times in 1914, because he did not interfere with earth's governments, to unseat them, during his allotted time allowance for them. But now is the judgment time and he is harvesting those who will come to his side, favor and protection. Then through his mighty angels he will turn his attention to the vine of the earth. Certainly in all the centuries it has had, it has produced an abundant load of clusters and its grapes are certainly ripe and ready for trampling. Wickedness today has come to the full.

The sixth angel, who calls for the "vine of the earth" to be cut down, emerges from the altar where the sacrificial fire was kept burning. This angel would therefore be well acquainted with the activities of the 144,000 spiritual brothers of Christ, who during their course on earth have offered up sacrifices of praise and good works to God and have

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- The Long-suffering of God an Eternal Blessing to Mankind.
- Be Long-suffering Toward All.
- When It's Good to Be Together.
- A Sign the Astronauts Failed to See.

done so under the greatest persecution, suffering and martyrdom from those who drink the fruitage of the "vine of the earth." The angel is coming to their help by ordering the cutting down of this vine. He pictures, therefore, those angels who are "spirits for public service, sent forth to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation." (Heb. 1:14; 13:12-16) These angels in directing and ministering to God's servants on earth will not order the earthly servants to cut it down, but they do direct these earthly servants in publishing advance notice to the world that the vine will soon be cut down.

THE WINEPRESS

The fifth angel with the sickle takes action against the vine: "And the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and he hurled it into the great wine press of the anger of God." Being hurled into the winepress to have its grapes thoroughly trampled out, there will be no chance that this vine once cut down will take root again and disturb mankind with its death-dealing fruit. What a tremendous winepress it will take to tread out all the nations and kingdoms of this world! In the prophecy of Joel (3: 9-14) the valley of Jehoshaphat outside of Jerusalem is used as a symbol of the place where all the nations fighting against Jehovah will be trodden down and annihilated. The winepress of Revelation is bigger even than this valley, for the account goes on to say: "And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the wine press as high up as the bridles of the horses, for a distance of a thousand six hundred furlongs [two hundred miles]."—Rev. 14:20.

The tremendous size of the winepress emphasizes the scope of the destruction of the vine of the Devil's system of political government over mankind. The

whole earth will actually be the scene of the battle of Armageddon. In Isaiah 63: 3-6 Jehovah says: "The wine trough I have trodden by myself, while there was no man with me from the peoples. And I kept treading them in my anger, and I kept trampling them down in my rage. And their spurting blood kept spattering upon my garments, and all my clothing I have polluted. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the very year of my repurchased ones has come. And I kept looking, but there was no helper; and I began to show myself astonished, but there was no one offering support. So my arm furnished me salvation, and my rage was what supported me. And I kept stamping down peoples in my anger, and I proceeded to make them drunk with my rage, and to bring down to the earth their spurting blood."

The winepress, therefore, evidently symbolizes a condition, a cornered, trapped condition into which Almighty God by means of his Field Marshall Jesus Christ maneuvers his enemy forces. It will be a time when the measure of their guiltiness reaches its fullness. Jehovah knows how to reserve the ungodly until the day of judgment to be punished and so they will be caught "red-handed," as it were, and where their guilt is so obvious that there can be no question whatsoever that they fully deserve their destruction. He gives time allowance for the grapes producing wrath to come to full ripeness. So it comes upon them at just the right point of time and circumstances and God's winepress is big enough and is arranged and equipped perfectly to catch all and allow escape for not one of them.—2 Pet. 2:9.

THE GRAPES THOROUGHLY TRAMPLED

In this great symbolic winepress Jehovah's tremendous war organization of his holy angels under the lead of his crowned

king Jesus Christ will do the treading and will vent God's anger on the vine. No one of Jehovah's witnesses will have any part in the treading. It is like the attack threatening King Jehoshaphat by Moab, Ammon and Mount Seir in ancient times, in which God said: "You will not need to fight in this instance. Take your position, stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah in your behalf." (2 Chron. 20:17) The treading of the vine will be done, not by human feet, but by horses' hoofs. In the Bible horses are a symbol of war. It is God's war. It will be the most tremendous destruction the earth has ever witnessed because the vine is so big and loaded with grapes. The earth is filled with the violence caused by the wine they produce. The blood of the crushed grapes comes out to as high up as the bridles of the horses.

The war described at Revelation 14 as a treading is pictured at Daniel 2:44, 45 as the crushing of all the worldly nations and kingdoms by the rocklike kingdom of God. Daniel 12:1, 4 and Matthew 24:21, 22 say it is a time of distress and tribulation such as the nations and peoples have never known since this world began and the like of which will never take place again. That Jesus Christ will be in the fight and will be taking the lead is shown in Revelation 19:11-16, where he is spoken of as the leader of the armies in heaven who are on horses and as the one treading out the press of the wine of the wrath of the Almighty.

So we can be sure that Jehovah God will do a thorough work through his enthroned king Jesus Christ in trampling out every vestige of the "vine of the earth." This growth that has made the earth sick will have not even a trace of its tentacles left to cause uneasiness and fear to those peoples of earth who now take God's warning seriously. What a fine thing it will be to survive through that time! Only by Je-

hovah's protection can it be done. Joel's prophecy, after foretelling the treading of the nations in the winepress, says: "And out of Zion Jehovah himself will roar, and out of Jerusalem he will give forth his voice. And heaven and earth certainly will rock; but Jehovah will be a refuge for his people, and a fortress for the sons of Israel. And you people will have to know that I am Jehovah your God, residing in Zion my holy mountain." (Joel 3:16, 17) This means their surviving without dying into his new order of things.

A cancer operation is difficult and dangerous, providing a time of trial and tribulation for the patient, yet if the cancer can be removed completely it is a cause for rejoicing on the part of the patient that is able to come through the operation successfully. Just so it will be a difficult time unparalleled in history when the "vine of the earth" is cut down and trampled. But it will be a cause for rejoicing for earth's inhabitants when the "vine of the earth" is gone and when God's judgments fill the earth. Then the abundant fruitage of the true Kingdom vine will enable earth's inhabitants to practice righteousness and will bring them life and peace. Jehovah's witnesses are working hard now to see that honest-hearted people realize the seriousness of the situation and take the necessary steps for their preservation so that they can avoid being trampled in the winepress. Sometimes the urgent warning message that they have to proclaim is not accepted readily but they continue, nevertheless, for they are doing it to save lives. Revelation goes on to point out the things they must do to reveal the dangerous conditions along with the only way of escape to everlasting happiness. We may look for succeeding issues of this magazine to discuss Revelation's exciting fifteenth and sixteenth chapters.

Christian Children in Music Class

A FULL-TIME minister of Jehovah's witnesses in New York city relates an experience she had involving her daughter and some school officials:

"Though my youngest daughter qualified to be in the advanced music class at her school, she was removed from it. She was transferred to the regular class, which was not nearly as progressive as the advanced one. The teachers explained that this was necessary since my daughter, because of her Bible-based beliefs, would not play the patriotic and religious songs. At first I thought I should forget the matter. But my daughter had her heart set on learning to play an instrument. Knowing that her father's salary was not enough to allow for private music lessons, she had looked forward to studying music under the arrangement provided by the public-school system.

"The more I thought about what was happening, the more I realized how unfair the situation was. So I discussed it with my husband, and he felt that the matter deserved investigation. The next day I went to the school and spoke to my daughter's grade advisor, the music teacher and two of the assistants to the principal. They told me there was nothing that they could do since all music students must play all songs.

"The following week I contacted the district supervisor's office and was told to report the matter to the principal of the school. This surprised me, as I thought her assistants had presented her views. The next day I visited the principal in her office and tried to reason with her as I had done with the others. I mentioned that they are considerate of the religious beliefs of other children and even included them in their curriculum. Many children, for example, are permitted to leave school early on Wednesday for religious instruction. And on Fridays the cafeteria does not serve meat because of the religious beliefs of some students. 'Now,' I said, 'we are Jehovah's witnesses. Our children are in your schools. We are here to stay. Isn't it time you included us in your curriculum?'

"The principal listened very attentively. Then she heard her assistant's view. Finally, she said: 'I have never had a problem like this before; but if this child qualifies for

music instruction, then she is going to get it.' She sent for the music teacher, who insisted that all instruments and students were needed for each song. When the principal observed that only two patriotic songs were being taught, the music teacher told her that my daughter would not play the religious songs either. The principal looked at her and exclaimed: 'Well, how many religious songs do you play?' The music teacher started telling her some of the names of the songs. There was 'Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer' and 'O Come, All Ye Faithful.' Then the principal interrupted: 'Wait a minute! Take that one out. Even I don't like that one.'

"The final decision was that my daughter be put back in her original class. The principal asked about another young Witness, a brother who also had been removed from the music class. Her assistant said she would send for the boy's parents before taking further action. However, the principal replied: 'Don't bother. Put him back!' When she learned that there actually were three students involved, she said: 'Put all of them back. When songs are played that are not in agreement with their religious beliefs, they will sit quietly while the others play.'

"Later the principal said: 'We need mothers like you to work with us. Will you please come to a meeting in my office a few days from now?' I explained that my work as one of Jehovah's witnesses keeps me very busy, but that if I could, I would attend. She said that she knew of our work and that she had read our magazines and found them very practical and pertinent to world affairs.

"A card was sent to me informing me of the meeting, which I attended Wednesday morning. This was a meeting of women who formed the executive board of the directors of the school. They meet each month with the principal to discuss problems facing the school. Also, they visit the district supervisor and seek ways to cope with such problems. At this meeting I was invited to become a member of the board of directors. I declined the offer because of my ministerial responsibilities, but I thanked them for the invitation. As I left the school, I felt very thankful to Jehovah that everything had turned out for his honor and for the good of his people."

JEPHTHAH was both a general and a judge. He lived in the latter part of the period when judges ruled ancient Israel. Because of a vow he made that involved the course of his daughter's life, he and his daughter have become a favorite subject of authors, poets and composers. Upward of 300 poems, dramas and novels have been based on him and his daughter from the sixteenth century right to the present decade. And so have more than 170 musical compositions, among which are 100 oratorios including one by Handel.

As with so many other Biblical subjects, there is a wide difference of opinion as to Judge Jephthah and his vow and what happened to his daughter. The correct understanding will prove both enlightening and faith-strengthening.

Jephthah lived at a time when the Israelites had again fallen away from the pure worship of Jehovah God and he had permitted their enemies, this time the Ammonites, to oppress them for eighteen years. Like Judge Gideon, Jephthah was known to be "a mighty, valiant man." His father had the honorable name of Gilead, but his mother had been a harlot. Apparently Gilead had married this harlot when she became pregnant and thus made her his lawful wife. Otherwise Jephthah would have been an illegitimate son, and as such would not have been permitted to enter the congregation of Israel, not to say anything about his becoming a judge.—Judg. 11:1; Deut. 23:2.

JUDGE JEPHTHAH

and HIS VOW

Gilead, Jephthah's father, also had another wife by whom he had a number of sons. These took it upon themselves to drive out Jephthah, doubtless after their father's death, and most likely so as to keep Jephthah from getting the firstborn's

double inheritance. But their excuse was, "You are the son of another woman."—Judg. 11:2.

"So Jephthah ran away because of his brothers and took up dwelling in the land of Tob," which lay beyond the territory of Israel. There a number of "idle" men joined themselves to him, even as years later many "men in distress" joined themselves to David after he had fled King Saul's wrath.—Judg. 11:3; 1 Sam. 22:2.

It seems that just shortly before this the Ammonites again invaded the land of Gilead, it being the fertile region on the east side of the Jordan River. The princes and people of Gilead had proclaimed: "Who is the man that will take the lead in fighting against the sons of Ammon? Let him become the head of all the inhabitants of Gilead." (Judg. 10:18) Apparently no one was available or volunteered. However, when the Ammonites began to attack the Israelites, the situation became desperate and so "the older men of Gilead immediately went to take Jephthah out of the land of Tob," saying to him: "Do come and serve as our commander, and let us fight against the sons of Ammon." When Jephthah demurred because of the way they had treated him, they promised to make him their head.—Judg. 11:4-8.

JEPHTHAH BECOMES HEAD

Jephthah's reply revealed a fine trait of his, his 'taking notice of Jehovah in all his ways.' (Prov. 3:6) Thus he replied: "If . . . *Jehovah does abandon [the enemy] to me*, I, for my part, shall become your head!" He was not counting on victory apart from Jehovah. The men of Gilead had made no mention of Jehovah in their previous statements, but when they saw how Jephthah was oriented, always taking Jehovah into consideration, they responded: "Let Jehovah prove to be the listener between us if the way we shall do is not according to your word." Agreeing, Jephthah returned with them and then "proceeded to speak all his words before Jehovah in Mizpah."—Judg. 11:9-11.

Though Jephthah was "a mighty, valiant man," he was not spoiling for a fight. Rather, he first tried to negotiate a peaceable settlement. He sent word to the king of Ammon asking why he had come to fight against Israel. The king of Ammon replied that this land had originally belonged to them and that Israel had taken it when coming out of Egypt.—Judg. 11:12, 13.

Fully familiar with the history of his people, Jephthah reminded the king of Ammon that the Israelites had taken this land from the Amorites (not the Ammonites), and that they did this only because the Amorites began to attack the Israelites, and that Jehovah had given his people the victory and this land. For 300 years now, Israel had this land, and just as the king of Ammon would want to possess the land that his god Chemosh gave to him so Israel will possess the land that Jehovah gave to them. Again bringing Jehovah into the picture, Jephthah continued: "As for me, I have not sinned against you, but you are dealing wrong with me by fighting against me. Let Jehovah the Judge

judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon."—Judg. 11:14-28.

Since Jephthah took notice of Jehovah in all his ways, it was but to be expected that Jehovah would put his spirit upon him, and so we read: "Jehovah's spirit now came upon Jephthah," upon which he passed through the territory of Gilead and Manasseh recruiting his army, at the same time sending a call to the Ephraimites for help. Again Jephthah shows that he is one who 'takes notice of Jehovah in all his ways,' for he now "made a vow to Jehovah and said: 'If you without fail give the sons of Ammon into my hand, it must also occur that the one coming out, who comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, must also become Jehovah's, and I must offer that one up as a burnt offering.'"—Judg. 11:29-31.

After making this vow, Jephthah and his forces fought against the Ammonites "and Jehovah proceeded to give them into his hand." He made a clean sweep of the pagan invaders, taking twenty cities and destroying the foe "with a very great slaughter. Thus the sons of Ammon were subdued."—Judg. 11:32, 33.

But Jephthah's fighting was not yet over. His victory aroused the envy of the proud and powerful tribe of Ephraim, even as Gideon's victory previously had done. Its men now threatened to burn Jephthah's house over his head because they charged he had not called on them for help. But they were lying, even as Jephthah reminded them, and then he again gave Jehovah the credit for the victory: "When I got to see that you were no savior, then I determined to put my soul in my own palm and go over against the sons of Ammon. At that Jehovah gave them into my hand. So why have you come up against me this day to fight against me?"—Judg. 12:1-3.

The Ephraimites, having crossed the Jordan to war with Jephthah, left him no choice but to fight with them, with the result that he and his men roundly defeated the Ephraimites, slaying 42,000. Thereafter Jephthah served Israel as judge for six years, after which he died and was buried in Mizpah.—Judg. 12:4-7.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW

When Jephthah earlier had returned victoriously from battle with the sons of Ammon to his home in Mizpah, who should be the first to meet him from his own house but his daughter, "with tambourine playing and dancing!" She was absolutely his only child, we are told. When her father caught sight of her he exclaimed: "Alas, my daughter! You have indeed made me bend down . . . I have opened my mouth to Jehovah, and I am unable to turn back."—Judg. 11:34, 35.

Dutifully, his daughter replied: "My father, if you have opened your mouth to Jehovah, do to me according to what has gone forth from your mouth, since Jehovah has executed acts of vengeance for you upon your enemies." How much like her father she was! All she asked was a two-month period to mourn her virginity on the mountains with her girl companions, which he granted her and after which

Jephthah carried out his vow regarding her.—Judg. 11:36-39.

What about this vow? Why did Jephthah make it? What did he mean by it, and did he literally offer up his daughter as a burnt sacrifice? It will help to answer these questions by first answering another, Just what kind of man was Jephthah?



Many critics speak of Jephthah's vow as rash, impious, foolish, ill-considered, and invariably these also hold that he literally offered up his daughter as a burnt offering upon an altar. They are also prone to portray Jephthah as an uncouth and ignorant man. But in all this they are greatly mistaken, as we shall see.

In the first place, let it be noted that Jephthah is given honorable mention among other champions of faith by both the prophet Samuel and the writer of the book of Hebrews. Had he been an ignorant, rough man that carried out a foolish vow he certainly would not have been mentioned with these others.—1 Sam. 12:11; Heb. 11:32.

Moreover, we have seen how he kept taking notice of Jehovah. This quality helps us to understand why he made this vow. Why? No doubt because he had such a great desire that Jehovah's cause be victorious that he was willing to sacrifice anything for it, be what it may. Jehovah

certainly was very real to him! Besides, do we not read that 'Jehovah's spirit came upon Jephthah' shortly before he made this vow? It is therefore reasonable to conclude that what Jephthah vowed was entirely in harmony with God's holy spirit.

It, therefore, does not seem reasonable to conclude that Jephthah intended to offer up literally whoever came out to meet him as a burnt offering. Such a course would go against God's law about the sanctity of human life and would be the only instance in the whole Bible where a human was actually sacrificed by another person who had God's approval. Rather, it seems reasonable to conclude that what Jephthah intended, and what he did, was that whoever came out to meet him was to be dedicated to God's service and that he used the expression "burnt offering" merely as a figure of speech.—Gen. 9:6.

He could not have thought that some animal would come out to meet him, as some claim, for he said that "the one coming out . . . of the doors of my house to meet me" he would offer up, and the Israelites did not keep lower animals in their houses—not even dogs, which some people today keep as pets! So he must have had in mind either a servant or a relative and that it might even be his only child, his beloved daughter. But regardless of the cost, he was willing to pay it if Jehovah would only grant him the victory!

Further, far from Jephthah's being an uncouth and ignorant man, we can see from his dealings with the Ammonites and the Ephraimites that he was a reasonable man, not impetuous, but one who approached a difficult situation calmly. More than that, he showed that he was very familiar with Israel's history and therefore must also have been familiar with God's commands forbidding the offering up of one's offspring as burnt offerings: "There should not be found in you any-

one who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire."—Deut. 18:10; Jer. 7:31.

Then again, the very submissive attitude of his daughter speaks eloquently in favor of Jephthah. She did not think the vow foolish nor did she censure her father for making it. However, had she been facing certain death, would she have wanted to mourn merely her virginity? Thus we also note that, after the record states that her father carried out his vow regarding her, it says: "As for her, she never had relations with a man." Would that have been the outstanding thing about her if she had been the only human that had ever been actually sacrificed as a burnt offering on an altar by one of God's servants? That comment does not seem to make sense unless we understand that she kept on living, but as a virgin.—Judg. 11:39.

Also there is the statement: "It came to be a regulation in Israel: From year to year the daughters of Israel would go to give commendation to the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, four days in the year."* Could these give her commendation if she were dead? Besides, there is nothing said about this regulation elsewhere in the Scriptures. Why not? No doubt because it only lasted as long as she was alive, after which it ceased.—Judg. 11:39, 40.

PROPHETIC PATTERN

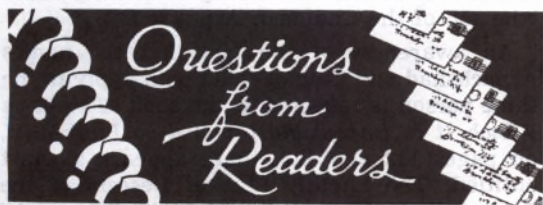
This correct understanding of the matter puts Jephthah in the right light and is consistent with the rest of the record about him. It also fits the facts that pertain to God's people in our day, of which it was a prophetic pattern, for it is part of all the things written for our instruction.—1 Cor. 10:11.

* Translations that read "lament" here, such as AV, RS, err, for the Hebrew word is *tanah*, meaning "to praise."

Yes, even as with so many other ancient events recorded in the Bible, we find parallels in our day. As was Jephthah, so God's organization, as represented on earth by the dedicated and anointed footstep followers of Jesus, is a mature fighter for God's cause, these serving as the "faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24: 45-47) As Jephthah devoted his choicest possession to God's service, so these have a daughter class, as it were, the "great crowd" of "other sheep" whom they have

devoted to Jehovah's service, wanting no reward for themselves but only that these serve Jehovah even as they themselves are doing.—Rev. 7:9; John 10:16.

Here, then, is the lesson of Jephthah and his vow for all servants of Jehovah God today: Take notice of Jehovah in all your ways, put the triumph of his causes above everything else, pay what you have vowed and devote to Jehovah and his cause what fruits you may receive from his service.



● After the Deluge, Noah sent out from the ark a dove that later returned with "an olive leaf freshly plucked in its bill." (Gen. 8:10, 11) Would not the trees have been ruined by the Flood? Where did the dove get the olive leaf? —C. J., U.S.A.

While the waters of the Flood undoubtedly did adversely affect many plants and trees, it does not seem improbable that an olive tree might survive them. The olive tree is quite hardy. It has been said of it that "an old stump will continue to send up new stems, as if its vitality were indestructible." (*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Volume IV, page 404) It is also noteworthy that the Greek philosopher and scientist Theophrastus and the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder have stated that the olive has grown under water in the Red Sea, retaining its verdure there. So the olive tree might well have remained submerged under water for some months during the Flood without dying. With the abating of the waters an olive tree that had been covered thereby would again be on dry ground and could put forth leaves, so the dove could easily obtain a leaf. The return of the dove with the freshly plucked olive leaf in its bill was of significance to the ark's hu-

man occupants. In that way "Noah got to know that the waters had abated from the earth." —Gen. 8:11.

● Would it be proper for a Christian married couple to adopt a child?—J. W., U.S.A.

Whether to adopt a child is a matter to be decided by the individual married couple. The situation is similar to determining whether to have a natural child, in cases where that is possible. The decision made by one married couple in such matters would not be the criterion on which others must base their decision. Nor would it be fitting to criticize persons for the course they choose to follow in these respects.

The Watch Tower Society has no arrangements for assisting persons in arranging child adoptions. It does not maintain a list of names and addresses of individuals who desire to have their children adopted by others. Nor can the Society furnish legal aid in such matters.

If marriage mates legally adopt a child, they become responsible for that child in a manner that is comparable to the responsibility resting upon natural parents. Hence, Christians who adopt a child will wish to care for that child properly, giving attention not only to the child's physical needs but also to the child's more important spiritual needs. The adopting father, who is the head of the household, is Scripturally required to shoulder the principal responsibility for both the child's material and spiritual welfare.—1 Tim. 5:8; Isa. 38:19; Eph. 5:21-6:4.

Some Christians have viewed childlessness

or the having of fewer children to be a circumstance allowing them more time for the service of Jehovah God. Childless couples, for instance, do not have the responsibilities that go with the rearing of children and thus have greater opportunities to expend their time and energies in the direct pursuit of Kingdom interests.—Matt. 6:33.

Married couples, of course, must govern their own affairs. They know their individual circumstances and desires. So, it is up to them to decide whether to adopt a child or not.—Gal. 6:5.

● Who was the father of the Shelah mentioned in the Bible? Was he Cainan or Arpachshad?—J. B., U.S.A.

Evidently Arpachshad was the father of Shelah. However, the foregoing question arises because of seeming disharmony between certain Bible texts. For example, according to the Hebrew Masoretic Text, Genesis 10:24 and 1 Chronicles 1:18 indicate that Arpachshad was the father of Shelah. On the other hand, Luke, in giving the genealogy of Jesus Christ through his mother, Mary, states at Luke 3:35, 36 that Shelah was "the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad [Arpachshad]."

In considering this matter, it is interesting to note that the name Cainan does not appear in extant Hebrew manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures and is omitted in all ancient versions and targums.

Many believe that the name Cainan was not to be found in the original text of Luke's Gospel account. Notably, in a footnote on Luke 3:36 in the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, 1950 edition, it is pointed out that the expression "the son of Cainan" is omitted in the Cambridge Manuscript, which is of the sixth century C.E. Such an omission harmonizes with the Masoretic Text at Genesis 10:24; 11:12 and 1 Chronicles 1:18. Yet, it is acknowledged that the name Cainan may be a corruption of the word "Chaldean." Hence, the Greek text of Luke 3:36 may once have read: "the son of the Chaldean Arphaxad."

An awareness of the fact that the names Arpachshad and Cainan could both apply to the same person is reflected in the book *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie."* In it, on pages 112 and 113, there appears a chart entitled "The Earthly Line of Descent of the Son of God as the Seed of God's 'Woman.'" There one finds the name Arpachshad followed by the name Cainan in parentheses.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

It is a great kindness to others to encourage them to attend the meetings of the congregation too. At their weekly Bible studies held in relatively small groups in various neighborhoods throughout their congregation territory, Jehovah's witnesses are at present studying the fine book *"Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie."* With a view to sharing this vital information with others, during July they will offer that book, with a booklet, to other interested persons on a contribution of 50c.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

July 24: Gaining Maturity Through Personal Study Is Joyful. Page 392.
July 31: Exercising Maturity—A Safeguard. Page 398.

FIELD MINISTRY

It is important for every one of Jehovah's witnesses to keep in mind the Scriptural counsel not to "neglect the house of our God." And