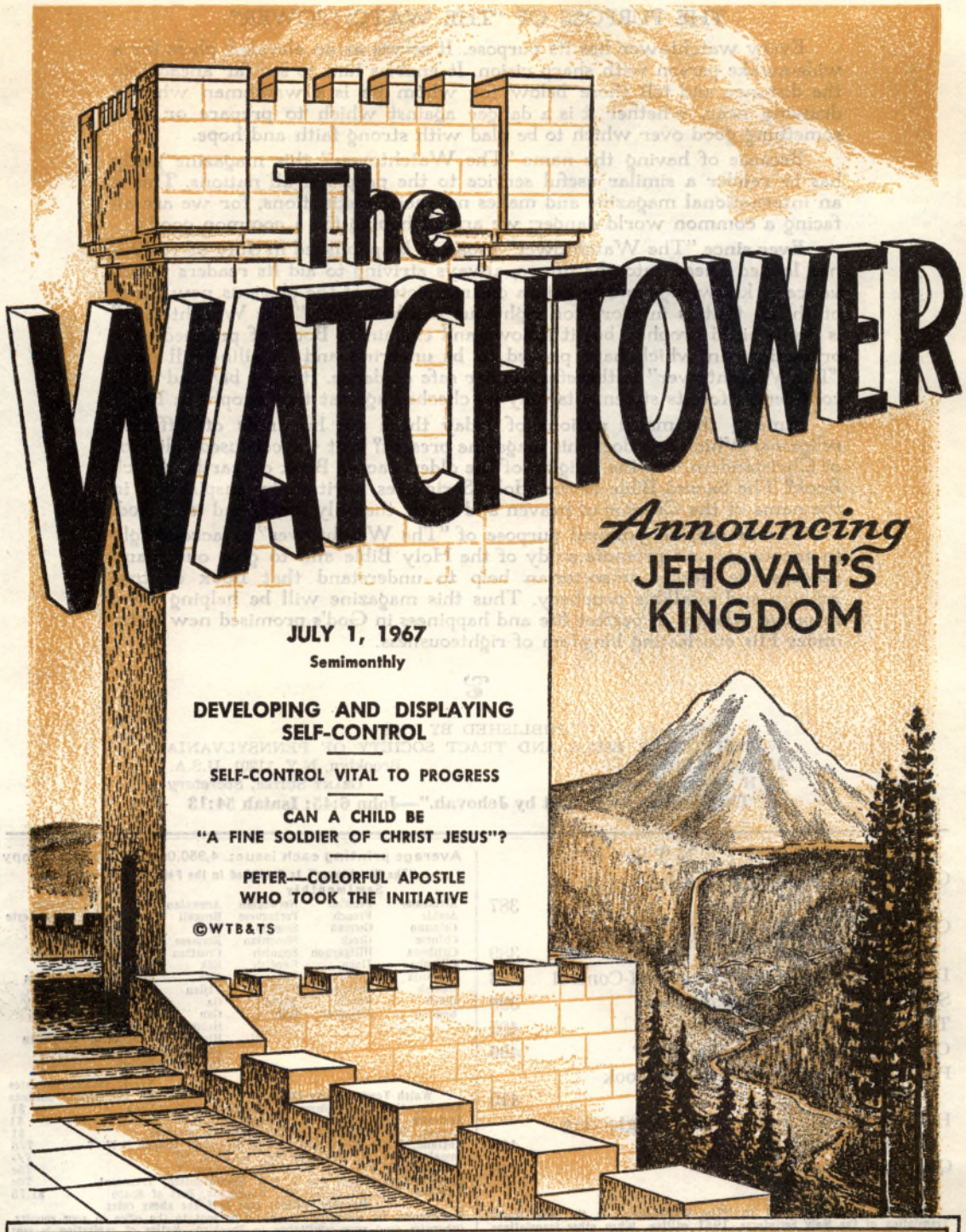

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

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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Dy – Catholic Douay version
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GUARD AGAINST Being *Quick* to Question Motives

HOW prone fallen human nature is to be quick to question the motives of others! A child brings a gift to his teacher in appreciation of her efforts, but his schoolmates may be quick to accuse him of doing it for selfish reasons, because he wants to become a favorite of the teacher. Petty? Childish? No doubt, but perhaps also a little selfishness, a little lack of love, is involved in this readiness to question his motives.

Yes, being quick to question the motives of others is unloving, and adults are sometimes as prone to do it as are children. In our everyday associations, however, we should want to be quick to attribute good motives to others, be kindly disposed toward them and ready to give them the benefit of the doubt.

So, when a husband wants to make his wife happy by surprising her with a bouquet of flowers or a box of candy, let her rejoice in that expression of love; let her *not*, without very good reason, begin to wonder what his motive was, as though he had been guilty of some indiscretion and now was trying to make amends! How unloving, how foolish! And yet there are wives who think and act in just that way —and husbands too, for that matter!

It will help us to guard against being quick to question the motives of others if we call to mind that in the Bible Satan the Devil is repeatedly shown as doing this. Thus when Jehovah God called Satan's attention to righteous Job, Satan was quick to question Job's motives for serving God. But in spite of all that Satan was able to do, he was proved wrong and Job true.—Job 1:7-22; 42:7-17; Rev. 12:10.

And among those reaching the very nadir, or lowest depths, in questioning the motives of others have been such men as atheist Marquis de Sade, whose philosophy was to attribute a base motive to every honorable human action. According to him —to give but one example—parents do not deserve respect and gratitude, for in producing offspring and then rearing them they have simply followed selfish instincts and motives. But the Creator, Jehovah God, in making man in his image and likeness, did make a creature capable of reaching heights of nobility, goodness and unselfishness.—Gen. 1:26, 27.

Being quick to question the motives of others is foolish, for it can rob one of much happiness. Especially with one's Christian brothers, it is far *better to find*

oneself erring on the side of being too generous, too trusting, than in being too critical, too suspicious. By being trusting instead of suspicious one will not needlessly cause misunderstandings, and one will not be tempted to say or do things one might afterward regret! In fact, it is good for both mind and body to be hopeful, to want to believe good things about others.

The Bible gives us an example of the folly of being quick to question the motives of another at 2 Samuel 10:1-19. King David of Israel once sent condolences to the king of Ammon because of the death of his father. However, that king was quick to question King David's motives and stubbornly maintained his mistaken position, even to influencing a neighboring king to war with King David. In the end the king of Ammon brought only trouble upon himself and his people.—2 Sam. 12:26-31.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Festivals of Praise to Jehovah.
- The Three Annual National Conventions.
- True Christianity Inspires Unselfishness.
- The Refining Power of Adversity.

An aid against the tendency to be quick to question the motives of others is to recognize that it may be a form of rivalry, of competition. How so? In that, by being quick to question the motives of another, one is downgrading that one and thereby upgrading oneself by comparison. This might well be done unconsciously, for the human heart is deceitful.—Jer. 17:9, *RS*.

By being quick to question the motives of others, one presumes to do more than one actually can. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was able to judge the motives of others quickly, even as the Gospel records show. And so was the apostle Peter, because of being miraculously empowered by the holy spirit, as can be seen by his exposing the hypocritical liars Ananias and Sapphira. But God has not endowed any person on earth today with such power.—Matt. 22:17, 18; Acts 5:1-11.

In particular will empathy, or the ability to put oneself in the shoes of another, as it were, help one to guard against being quick to question the motives of others. We usually give ourselves credit for having good motives for what we say and do, do we not? Then why not grant that others likewise have good motives for their words and actions? It really is a matter of doing to others as we would have them do to us. We would not want others to be quick to question our motives, would we?—Matt. 7:12.

Not that all questioning of motives is wrong. After all, in business dealings one must recognize the temptation that self-interest presents to exaggerate, to stretch the truth or to engage in sharp practices. "Let the buyer beware" is but using good sense in such cases. And there is also a time and a place for judging motives, after they have been revealed by overt actions; as when a wrongdoer is summoned before a judicial committee of a Christian congregation. But note that there is nothing quick or hasty about questioning motives in such a case.—1 Cor. 5:1-13; Jude 4-19.

However, aside from such exceptions, when considering the motives of our fellows at our places of employment, in our own family circle or within the Christian congregation, let us be generous, charitable, trusting, ready to give others the benefit of the doubt. Remember, it is God who 'sees what the heart is.' However, we can read our own heart, so, more than all else that is to be guarded, let us safeguard our own heart, making sure that our own motives are always pure.—1 Sam. 16:7; Prov. 4:23.

CAN A CHILD BE "A FINE SOLDIER OF CHRIST JESUS"?

How young can a child be taught? What are the rewards for starting early?

CAN a young child be "a fine soldier of Christ Jesus"? Can he intelligently witness to his faith in God and in the Bible? Can he effectively discuss Bible teachings and principles with others, thus truly being like Timothy of old, "a fine soldier of Christ Jesus"?—2 Tim. 2:3.

These questions have been made pertinent by reason of what one of America's most popular Roman Catholic prelates, Bishop Sheen, radio and TV personality, had to say on the subject. Recently appointed bishop of Rochester, New York, he has made a number of innovations, among which is that from now on children in his diocese will be confirmed at the time of their graduation from high school, not at the usual age of from nine to twelve years.

Explaining his reasons for the change, he, among other things, stated: "At present bishops are asked to confirm tots and send them out as soldiers of Christ. Confirmation should not be administered generally before the candidate is ready to exercise his lay priesthood in the world." Apparently Bishop Sheen does not consider that Catholic youths are able to do this before seventeen or eighteen years of age, for that is the usual age of those graduating from high school.—*Time*, February 24, 1967.

At just what age can children be soldiers of Christ Jesus? That would depend, in part, upon how seriously their parents are concerned with instructing their children in the Bible and, to a large extent, also upon the disposition of the children themselves.

CURRENT EXPERIENCES FROM REAL LIFE

That quite young children can be effective witnesses to their faith is being repeatedly demonstrated. Thus a man in Germany one day announced to his four children that he was going to look for another mother for them because their present mother was studying with Jehovah's witnesses. His youngest child, an eight-year-old daughter, spoke up, saying: "Why, Daddy, you can't do that! Don't you know you would be committing adultery?" Taken aback, he angrily replied: "What? You don't even know what that means! What are you using words like that for?" Unabashed, the child replied, explaining what an adulterer is. "The Bible says that when you have a wife you are supposed to stay with her and not divorce her. Anyone who does divorce his wife and marries another is an adulterer." (Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:9) Then for about a half hour she spoke in defense of Bible study, with her mother and her father listening silently. For some time thereafter the father avoided having anything to do with her; and while he has not left off opposing his wife's Bible studying, he no longer talks about getting another mother for his children.

Yes, even an eight-year-old can speak

confidently in behalf of faith in Christ Jesus if her parents heed the words of Jesus: "Let the young children come to me; do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to suchlike ones." —Mark 10:14.

And then there was a certain youngster living in a large city in Central America. At the age of nine he was vigorously defending his Adventist religion in his discussions with Jehovah's witnesses. Then one day he decided to attend a meeting of the Witnesses to see how much fault he could find with their teachings and way of doing things. But what he saw and heard so appealed to him that he accepted the invitation to attend a home Bible study meeting the following Tuesday. At this study he obtained his own copy of the textbook used, *"Let God Be True,"* and from then on he kept attending the meetings of the Witnesses. In three months he was going from house to house by himself, offering Bible magazines to the householders. Some months later, at the age of ten, he was baptized in obedience to the command given at Matthew 28:19, 20. Shortly thereafter he enrolled as a full-time pioneer minister and two years later he was appointed as a special pioneer minister along with his mother.

In this capacity he was sent, together with his mother, to a town where there were no Witnesses. In three years there was a group of fifteen Witnesses there, and so they were organized as a congregation. At fifteen years of age he was appointed the congregation overseer, at the same time being given other responsible duties to perform, such as the conductor of the congregation *Watchtower* study and the Theocratic Ministry School servant. The apostle Paul's counsel, "Let no man ever look down on your youth," could certainly have applied to him there. (1 Tim. 4:12) Four years later he was transferred to another congregation and then several years later he was invited to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead at Brooklyn, New York, where he is now studying. Certainly this lad did not need to wait until his late teens before becoming "a fine soldier of Christ Jesus," did he? While his experience in many respects is outstanding, that such young children can be fine soldiers of Christ Jesus is repeatedly shown in the annual *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses.*

YOUTHFUL CAPACITY TO LEARN

The fact is that many adults have long underestimated the capacity of young children to learn, as well as their wanting to learn, their fondness for taking in knowledge. Pertinent in this regard are the findings of the social scientists Wann, Dorn and Liddle, as published in their book *Fostering Intellectual Development* (1963). Among other things these researchers, who interviewed hundreds of preschool children, stated:

"The depth and extent of the information and understanding of these three-, four-, and five-year-old children was much greater than we had anticipated. . . . Early in the study it was clear that the interests of young children were universal in their scope. . . . Impressive as was the extent of the knowledge of the young children even more impressive were the ways in which they were using and testing the knowledge. Information became for these children raw building materials for thinking and reasoning. . . . They associated ideas. They sought to understand cause and effect relationships." Typical was the question a four-year-old asked the first time he saw a big steam shovel at work: 'Daddy, what kind of machine was used to make the earth?'

And underscoring the importance of loving consideration on the part of par-

ents in the development of a child's faculties are the findings of a team of British physicians in their study of the causes and effects of premature births. They found that often it was unfavorable economic conditions that caused mothers to give birth to their children prematurely. At first it also seemed that the premature child was under a definite handicap in school, but then it was found that this was only because such handicapped children came from homes where children received little maternal care and where parents manifested little interest in the school progress of their children. Children born prematurely were found to be right up with their schoolmates having normal births if they received maternal care and their parents were interested in the progress they made in school.

Such findings underscore the fact that children can be trained to become fine soldiers of Christ before they reach their late teens. But it is not likely that they will be such without good, interested parental supervision, which emphasizes the need of parents' starting early in teaching their children about God and the Bible. How early? As early as possible. In fact, those interested in reading progress tell us that mothers should begin to read to their children at least by the age of two and make a regular habit of it. This calls to mind what Moses commanded the fathers in Israel: "You must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your vital force. And these words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." Yes, no opportunity was to be overlooked in teaching young Hebrew children about God and his requirements.—Deut. 6:5-7.

That the Christian disciple Timothy was so taught from earliest childhood by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois —his father being a Greek unbeliever— is to be seen from what the apostle Paul wrote him years later: "You, however, continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe, knowing from what persons you learned them and that from *infancy* you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." No question about it, Timothy was taught about God and the Bible at a very tender age. —2 Tim. 3:14, 15.

Wise Christian parents will therefore begin early in making their children familiar with Bible truths. As soon as they are able to recognize and say words they can be taught that God made all things, that he has a name, Jehovah, that his place of dwelling is in the heavens above, that he cannot be seen with human eyes and that his Book, which is holy and is our guide, is the Bible. In this regard a most valuable study aid is *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained.* Another real help in this respect are the new recordings of Christian songs found in the songbook *"Singing and Accompanying Yourselves with Music in Your Hearts,"* even as many mothers have testified. It takes effort, but it is rewarding to note the knowledge that young children can acquire and use as they begin to walk in the footsteps of Christ Jesus.

PERSONALITY TRAINING ALSO BEGINS EARLY

However, for your child to become a fine soldier of Christ Jesus it is just as important, if not more so, that he be trained from earliest infancy in right principles. In fact, from the very first weeks and months of a child's life the mother is helping to develop the infant's

personality by the love and care she bestows upon her child. Thus a Dr. S. F. Yolles writes: "Child psychologists and psychiatrists are finding surprising new facts . . . A baby is a seeking, reacting human being—with previously unsuspected capacity to learn very early in life and to be far more deeply influenced for good or ill—by the impact of his mother's behavior."

In a similar vein Dr. Spock, America's most popular child-training counselor, states that by the age of three years a child's tendencies have already been formed toward constructive or destructive ends. "Personality trends that have been fairly well defined before the age of three have to do with such general attitudes as trustfulness vs. suspiciousness, friendliness vs. antagonism, optimism vs. pessimism," and so forth. And says Benjamin Fine, an education editor of the New York *Times,* in his book *1,000,000 Delinquents:* "The first six years are the most important for determining our characters."

All of which is in line with the findings of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, who are credited with making America's most ambitious studies and research on the subject of the causes of juvenile delinquency. They have found that delinquents are likely to come from homes where there is little understanding, affection and moral strength and that tendencies toward delinquency "are apparently anchored deeply in body and mind and essentially derive their malformations of personality . . . during the first few years of life."

In view of these facts the words of the apostle Paul to the Christians at Thessalonica contain a meaning for all mothers. He had been the first to preach the good news to them and so might be said to have reared them from spiritual infancy. In doing so he had been so effective that their ability to weather persecution became a thing of note. And what was Paul's method? "We became gentle in the midst of you, as when a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, having a tender affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not only the good news of God, but also our own souls, because you became beloved to us." How wise, therefore, the Scriptural position that circumscribes woman's sphere so that she can give her prime attention to the loving care and training of her children! —1 Thess. 2:7, 8.

Not that mothers alone have this responsibility, but they certainly are with their children more during those all-important preschool years. That fathers also have a responsibility the apostle Paul shows in the same connection, for he also likened his activity to that of a father: "As a father does his children, we kept exhorting each one of you, . . . that you should go on walking worthily of God." (1 Thess. 2:11, 12) As already noted, Moses commanded fathers to instruct their children about Jehovah and the apostle Paul told fathers to 'bring up their children in the authoritative advice of Jehovah.' There is nothing better in this regard than for a father to have a regular Bible study with his children. Both parents must cooperate, each according to his or her time and opportunities, of which the mother has the more, but what the father does often carries more weight. And so we read: "Listen, my son, to the discipline of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother."—Eph. 6:4; Prov. 1:8.

Yes, if parents properly teach a child, starting early, the result can be that, even in his tender years, the child can bring them much joy, and, far from turning to delinquency, become a dedicated servant of God and prove himself to be "a fine soldier of Christ Jesus."

Developing and Displaying Self-Control

"The fruitage of the spirit is ... self-control."–Gal. 5:22, 23.

A GENUINE pearl is something of value. It is rare and is keenly desired. But it is not obtained without effort. In the Persian Gulf, where it is said that the finest genuine saltwater pearls are acquired, the pearl diver may make twenty-five or thirty descents to the oyster beds a day, surfacing with perhaps a dozen oyster shells each time. Every dhow, which is an Arab coasting vessel, has a crew of forty to fifty men, half of whom are divers. Yet, we are told: "The yield of fine, genuine pearls is very small. For instance, in 1947, the crew of one boat opening a week's catch of 35,000 pearl oysters obtained only 21 pearls. Of this number only three were of gem quality, suitable for commercial use." (*The Encyclopedia Americana*, 1956 edition, Volume 21, page 455) To the rare and precious genuine pearl one might liken the quality of self-control. In these "last days" how uncommon it is! How many are "without self-control"!—2 Tim. 3:1-3.

[2] In the Christian Greek Scriptures the Greek word for self-control is *egkráteia,* which means 'self-command, self-control; temperance, moderation in pleasure; the mastery over, and government of the passions.' (*A New Greek and English Lexicon,* by James Donnegan, 1836, page 423) According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary,* self-control is "control of oneself: restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires." Or, it may be said that self-control means maintaining poise and balance of mental and physical forces, keeping them restrained or restricted. It is possible for Christians to manifest this desired quality, self-control, for they have God's holy spirit and "the fruitage of the spirit is . . . self-control [*egkráteia*]." (Gal. 5:22, 23) But, just as those who seek genuine pearls must labor industriously to secure them, *so* must spirit-filled Christians work hard at developing and displaying this valued pearllike quality, self-control.

1. To what might self-control be likened? Why?

2. Define self-control.

[3] Christ's life has been termed the 'mirror of temperance,' or of self-control. That self-control plays no small part in the lives of his followers is evident from the fact that the apostle Paul, when haled before Governor Felix nineteen centuries ago, talked to him "about righteousness and *self-control* [*egkráteia*] and the judgment to come." Yes, self-control was so important that Paul made a special point of discussing it when he was before the Roman governor Felix.—Acts 24:24-27.

[4] Self-control was a significant Christian quality nineteen centuries ago and it is vital today. As the end of this system of things draws ever nearer, there will be times of stress, of crushing anxiety, even grief, for many. With God's spirit as expressed in self-control, the Christian will be able to remain balanced, while others crumble under strain. With self-control Christians can and will endure the daily pressures of life and will weather the severe storms of persecution. They have already demonstrated that they can do so. Of course, to face great opposition and violent persecution, various Christian qualities must play their part. But, unquestionably, self-control is greatly needed. In ancient times Christians displayed it in many ways, even in the face of death—when others would readily have abandoned their principles. These facts of history require no proof here. (See *Awake!*, April 22, 1962, pages 20 and 21, and *The Watchtower*, February 1, 1958, pages 73 to 75.) Let it be noted, though, that self-controlled Christians have not wavered in their faith under extreme pressure in the present day.

[5] In his book entitled "The Nazi State," Professor Ebenstein of Princeton University wrote concerning Jehovah's witnesses: "When the witnesses did not give up the struggle for their religious convictions, a campaign of terror was launched against them which surpassed anything perpetrated against other victims of Nazism in Germany. . . . The sufferings of Jehovah's Witnesses in the camps were even worse than those meted out to Jews, pacifists or Communists. Small as the sect is, each member seems to be a fortress which can be destroyed but never taken." Also regarding persecution of Jehovah's witnesses, Richard Mathison states in his book *God Is a Millionaire:* "All this persecution has worn well. . . . And, perhaps, the sternly conventional have a lesson to learn from the unyielding courage of this persecuted minority. During the Korean War, the products of easy Protestantism, of our military schools and our better colleges cracked by the score under the stress and blandishments of Communist brainwashing. A Pentagon study of the problem brought forth a red-faced conclusion: Those few Jehovah's Witnesses who ended up as prisoners of war . . . withstood to a man the scientific, psychological efforts to convert them to Communism—better than a number of patriotic West Pointers." Obviously, self-control is one of the qualities needed by Christians to endure intense persecution. Of course, it is also required by servants of Jehovah in other ways, in the various aspects of life. But how may this valued pearl be acquired?

3. How important is self-control in Christian life?

4, 5. (a) Self-control will enable the Christian to face what as the end of this system of things draws nearer? (b) What modern-day evidence is there of the display of self-control by Jehovah's witnesses when persecuted?

HOW TO GAIN THIS FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

[6] "If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children," Jesus Christ once reasoned, "how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11:13) What an assurance! Indeed, Christians who earnestly pray to Jehovah for

6, 7. (a) If you wish to develop and display self-control, what is a primary requirement? (b) What qualities must mark Christian prayers for self-control?

his spirit as expressed in self-control will suffer no disappointment, for "no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us." (1 John 5:14, 15) So, as a Christian who wishes to develop and display self-control, pray to Jehovah through Christ for God's spirit so as to express this valued quality. (John 14:6, 14) And since continued effort will be required to maintain self-control, heed the admonition to "pray incessantly," to "persevere in prayer" and to "be vigilant with a view to prayers." (1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12; 1 Pet. 4:7) Good advice all this!

[7] In Christian prayers for Jehovah's spirit and self-control, there must be sincerity and humility. If there is anything within a person, in his heart, that is affecting his composure, he should pray to Jehovah as did David of old, who begged: "Search through me, O God, and know my heart. Examine me, and know my disquieting thoughts, and see whether there is in me any painful way, and lead me in the way of time indefinite." (Ps. 139:23, 24) Such humble, fervent prayer for Jehovah's aid will surely bring results.

[8] Besides praying, however, the Christian who prizes the pearl self-control should work to gain and maintain balance by means of daily Bible reading and study. Joshua was admonished: "This book of the law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone 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) Self-control, balance, as well as wisdom will result from such frequent consideration of the law of God, provided that you *apply* Biblical instruction. And those who constantly place Jehovah before themselves will not totter.—Ps. 16:8.

[9] But, understanding of Scriptural doctrines, laws and principles does not automatically come to a person. God is not dealing with individuals apart from his earthly organization. (Matt. 24:45-47) After the outpouring of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost in 33 C.E., followers of Christ met in homes, not only to eat together and to enjoy pleasant association, but to praise Jehovah. They held congregational meetings at which fellow believers could aid and encourage one another spiritually. (Heb. 10:24, 25; Matt. 18:20; Acts 2:46, 47) The same is so today. Attending Christian meetings enables one to receive spiritual instruction that is vital in developing fruits of God's spirit, including self-control. Also, at such gatherings one observes these qualities in action.

[10] Regular activity in the Christian ministry is also vitally important. It contributes to balance. When you, as a minister, encounter and tactfully deal with queries and contentions, you develop maturity and greater self-control. Experience gained in the ministry will help you to maintain composure, self-command. With that experience and Jehovah's aid, even under provocation you can "let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one."—Col. 4:6.

[11] Study of God's Word and the pursuit of Kingdom interests will also enable a person to develop spiritual-mindedness. Life's problems can be solved or at least lessened by appealing to and applying the Scriptures. The man with a spiritual viewpoint is balanced; he has self-control and is a happy person. So, fill your mind with the thoughts of God regularly. Be sure to reason on and apply Biblical principles

8, 9. (a) In addition to prayer, what is needed to gain and maintain balance? (b) What part do Christian meetings play in this regard?

10. How does regular activity in the Christian ministry contribute to balance?
11. How does a spiritual viewpoint aid one?

when problems arise. You can thereby gain and maintain possession of the precious pearl self-control.—1 Cor. 2:6-16.

[12] Developing moderation in all things and cultivating good habits will also contribute to self-control. A Christian overseer is to be "moderate in habits." But he is not the only individual in the congregation who should be that way. Paul said: "Women should likewise be . . . moderate in habits." (1 Tim. 3:2, 11) And to Titus the apostle wrote: "Let the aged men be moderate in habits." (Titus 2:2) So moderation and good habits are Christian musts! *Work* at being "moderate in habits" and make certain they are all good ones. This will improve your self-control.

[13] But beware! Others can affect your balance. You may now have useful Christian habits, but watch your associations. "Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:33) Bad associates may take you away from Christian fellowship and cause you to become a lover of the world. Never allow that to happen, for "the world is passing away and so is its desire." By all means display self-command in choosing your friends.—1 John 2:15-17.

[14] Having chosen your associates, how will you treat them? If you are to develop greater self-control, then in dealing with them you must have empathy, putting yourself in their place at times. (Matt. 7:12) Give others the benefit of the doubt. How much better this is than to assume that someone's oversight, his failure to speak to you on an occasion, for example, was a deliberate snub. Take a balanced view of matters. Display self-control and show insight. It will do you good. Remember this: "He that is showing insight in a matter will find good, and happy is he that is trusting in Jehovah."—Prov. 16:20.

12, 13. In considering self-control, what may be said of habits?

14. To develop greater self-control, how should you treat your associates? Why?

[15] To develop self-control further as a Christian, humbly accept discipline. It may come to you as you read the Bible and Christian publications, noting admonition that should be applied in your life. Or, it may come from some Christian overseer, who also receives discipline in keeping with his own needs. Why reject any Biblical or Christian discipline? After all, it all comes from God, "for whom Jehovah loves he disciplines." (Heb. 12:6) But, having considered ways of gaining the pearl self-control, let us appraise its value when in action.

CONTROL YOUR TEMPER, TONGUE AND THOUGHTS

[16] In ancient times, an unwalled city, or one whose walls had been breached by an enemy horde, was helpless indeed. Yet, a man lacking control of his temper is quite the same. Says Proverbs 25:28: "As a city broken through, without a wall, is the man that has no restraint for his spirit." Such a man is without true balance. He lacks insight too, for Proverbs 19:11 states: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger." Such a man should think of Christ. Jesus said of himself: "I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart." He pronounced mild-tempered ones happy. (Matt. 11:29; 5:5) So if you feel the urge to explode in a fit of anger, meditate on his words and follow his example.—Heb. 12:1-3.

[17] However, you may feel that it was relatively easy for Jesus, a perfect man, to control his spirit, while with imperfect humans it is quite another story. But is it? Abraham and Lot were just imperfect humans, though they were righteous men. (Gen. 15:6; 2 Pet. 2:7) When their herds-

15. What attitude should be adopted toward discipline?

16. (a) A man lacking control of his temper may be compared to what? (b) Whose temperament is noteworthy?

17. Can imperfect humans control their spirit? Prove your answer.

men became enmeshed in angry dispute, what did Abraham and Lot do? "Abram said to Lot: 'Please, do not let any quarreling continue between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we men are brothers.'" They separated but remained on good terms, as "brothers." (Gen. 13:5-12) Well, are not Christians spiritual brothers? Yes, of course. Then they too should resolve difficulties, not in a spirit of anger, but with self-control. How unchristian it would be to act otherwise!

[18] Perhaps you recall two fleshly brothers, sons of Jacob, who forfeited a better blessing because they were violent men, given to wrath. Regarding them Jacob said in his deathbed blessing of his sons: "Simeon and Levi are brothers. Instruments of violence are their slaughter weapons. Into their intimate group do not come, O my soul. . . . Cursed be their anger, because it is cruel, and their fury, because it acts harshly. Let me give them a portion in Jacob, but let me scatter them in Israel." (Gen. 49:5-7) These violent sons of Jacob acted harshly and with anger. They lacked self-control, whereas Abraham and Lot possessed it. Certainly Christians should avoid the course of Simeon and Levi and should imitate that of Abraham and Lot.

[19] Unrestrained temper damages relationships with others and it shows that one is not wise. "All his spirit is what a stupid one lets out," says Proverbs 29:11, "but he that is wise keeps it calm to the *last*." Aptly, the Congregator of old declared: "Better is one who is patient than one who is haughty in spirit. Do not hurry yourself in your spirit to become offended, for the taking of offense is what rests in the bosom of the stupid ones." (Eccl. 7:8, 9) Wisdom is not displayed by one who is egotistical. And "he that is quick to anger will commit foolishness." (Prov. 14:17) So, do not quickly take offense. Rise above petty annoyances. "Do not say: 'I will pay back evil!' Hope in Jehovah, and he will save you." (Prov. 20:22) Seek ways to turn aside the anger of others, remembering that "an answer, when mild, turns away rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up." (Prov. 15:1) Even if others cause offense, act quickly to rectify matters. Heed Paul's words: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state."—Eph. 4:26; Matt. 5:23, 24.

[20] Christians cannot afford to lose self-control and fly into a rage, showing hatred instead of love, nor should they harbor such enmity. (Prov. 26:24-26) If they did so, they would be in darkness. The apostle John wrote: "He that loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in his case. But he that hates his brother is in the darkness and is walking in the darkness, and he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." (1 John 2:9-11) Regardless of where you are or the nature of prevailing circumstances, maintain self-control. In the home, for example, do not be a harsh husband, a nagging wife or a pouting, ill-tempered child. (Col. 3:18-20) Uncontrolled tempers lead to rage and regret. But those who are kind, not harsh, considerate, not critical, and mild-tempered rather than ill-tempered will have heavenly approval in these respects.

[21] Naturally, to control your temper you have to control your tongue. James wrote: "Out of the same mouth come forth blessing and cursing. It is not proper, my broth-

18. With respect to spirit, whose course should Christians imitate and whose should they avoid?
19. What is the effect of unrestrained temper? So, what Scriptural advice should be heeded?
20. What did John say of one who hates his brother? Hence, how should Christians act?
21, 22. Control of the tongue calls for heeding what Scriptural counsel?

ers, for these things to go on occurring this way. A fountain does not cause the sweet and the bitter to bubble out of the same opening, does it? My brothers, a fig tree cannot produce olives or a vine figs, can it? Neither can salt water produce sweet water." (Jas. 3:10-12) Yes, James was discussing the tongue, and the powerful point he made is plain. Christians must surely restrain the tongue.

[22] Obscene speech, gossip and slander have no place in the Christian's life. "Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth," Paul told the Ephesians, "but whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be, that it may impart what is favorable to the hearers. . . . Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all injuriousness." (Eph. 4:29-31) Shun unclean speech. And watch what you say about others. (Ps. 15:1-3) Do not spread or even listen to gossip. As stories are repeated, they are often embellished. Gossip may thus develop into slander, concerning which the Israelites were told: "You must not go around among your people for the sake of slandering." (Lev. 19:16) Heed those words. In this and in other ways control your tongue.

[23] But if you are to shun gossip, slander and obscene speech, you must control your thoughts. So, if what is improper or unclean comes into mind, exercise restraint. Bring to mind and meditate on things that are righteous, chaste, lovable, well spoken of, virtuous and praiseworthy. (Phil. 4:8, 9) Pray to Jehovah for greater self-control. This means to avoid materialistic thinking and worry too. After all, Jesus said that "even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) So why be anxious? Jehovah knows your needs in the way of food, drink and clothing. Christ wisely declared: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you." (Matt. 6:25-34) What good advice! Follow it, exercising self-control, and you will be happy indeed.

23. How can Christians control their thoughts, and what kind of thinking should be avoided?

DISPLAY SELF-CONTROL IN EATING, DRINKING AND RECREATION

[24] While we should not be unduly concerned about acquiring food or drink, once we have it we should display self-control. Proverbs 23:20, 21 warns: "Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh. For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe one with mere rags." Of course, one's eating may not quite reach the point of outright gluttony. But overeating can mean a lethargic, unfruitful ministry and drowsiness at Christian meetings. Therefore, exercise self-control in eating. And by all means avoid drunkenness. It degrades a person. Furthermore, if a Christian became inebriated, this might stumble others and bring reproach upon Jehovah's organization. Drunkenness can easily ruin one's life entirely, for a habitual and unrepentant drunkard must be disfellowshiped from the Christian congregation. He surely pays for his lack of self-control!—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

[25] Even when he relaxes, a Christian cannot forget self-control if he is to please God. When enjoying recreation, he must be moderate. Sports, for example, must be kept in a proper place. "Bodily training is beneficial for a little," wrote Paul; "but godly devotion is beneficial for all things,

24. (a) Though one's eating may not reach the point of gluttony, what effect could it have? (b) What may result from a lack of self-control in drinking alcoholic beverages?

25. In seeking and enjoying recreation, what should the Christian bear in mind?

as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Tim. 4:8) In seeking recreation, the true Christian will not yield to imperfect inclinations of the fallen flesh, but will select types of entertainment or amusement that will have an upbuilding effect upon him. However, he will also use good judgment in not keeping late hours, which may injure his health and reduce his effectiveness in the ministry. So, off to bed he will go early Saturday night, for instance, so that he will be fresh and alert for ministerial activity on Sunday morning. Why dissipate energies foolishly in the pursuit of recreation, only to defeat its very purpose through a lack of self-control? Act wisely. Be moderate, exercising self-control in this aspect of life too.

[26] It is apparent, then, that, like the exquisite natural pearl, self-control is neither gained nor developed further without earnest effort. But it is worth all the work you put into gaining and manifesting it. Just consider its value and importance. By developing and displaying self-control in these last days, you will please Jehovah. And, by remaining faithful to him, you will be the happy recipient of his blessing now and in his promised new order. (2 Pet. 3:11-13) In fact, today, with so much to be done in praising Jehovah and preaching the good news of the Kingdom, self-control is *vital* to your Christian progress.

26. Why is self-control worth all the work put into gaining and manifesting it?

Self-Control VITAL TO PROGRESS

"Supply to your faith . . . self-control."–2 Pet. 1:5, 6.

"DO YOU wish to gain the prize at the Olympic games?—Consider the requisite preparations and the consequences: you must observe a strict regimen; must live on food which you dislike; you must abstain *from all* delicacies; must exercise yourself at the necessary and prescribed times both in heat and in cold; you must drink nothing cooling; take no wine as formerly; in a word, you must put yourself under the directions of a *pugilist,* as you would under those of a *physician,* and afterwards enter the lists. Here you may get your arm broken, your foot put out of joint, be obliged to swallow mouthfuls of dust, to receive many stripes, and after all be conquered." That was the lot of the Greek athlete of ancient times, according to the Greek philosopher Epictetus. They had no easy time of it. Those athletes, *such as* runners, made strenuous efforts to gain

1, 2. (a) What kind of training was required of Greek athletes of ancient times? (b) What quality is particularly needed by both athletes and Christians, and how does Paul express this?

fame and a corruptible crown. In the Olympian games it was fashioned from the wild olive; in the Pythian games, from laurel; in the Isthmian games, near Corinth, it was a pine wreath. Many were the rigors of the athlete's life and, among other qualities, he surely needed self-control—all this in what might well be a futile attempt to get personal glory and a perishable crown!

2 The apostle Paul, in his first canonical letter to the Corinthian congregation, used the ancient games as an illustration and showed the Christian's need for self-control. He likened followers of Christ to runners in a race, saying: "Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it. Moreover, every man taking part in a contest exercises *self-control* in all things." Obviously, Paul displayed self-control, for he went on to say: "Now they, of course, do it that they may get a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. Therefore, the way I am running is not uncertainly; the way I am directing my blows is so as not to be striking the air; but I browbeat my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow." (1 Cor. 9:24-27) Yes, Christians are like runners in a race, and a runner must discipline himself. He cannot be immoderate and erratic in habits and training. In his case self-control is vital for success.

3 Paul and the Corinthian believers to whom he wrote, men and women alike, were runners in a race that was much more important than any athletic contest. And for them success would mean, not a withering crown, but the "crown of life," of which the apostle John wrote later, as recorded at Revelation 2:10. To obtain this grand prize, these Christians had to exercise self-control. And as they did so they could all afford to look heavenward. Why? Because Jehovah God, who gives his holy spirit to true Christians, furnishes the supreme example of self-control in action. "I kept exercising self-control," Jehovah has declared through Isaiah. (Isa. 42:14) Of course, there comes a time when God shows that he is mightier than his enemies, but never does he lose his perfect self-control. (Isa. 42:13) Jehovah's principal attributes of love, power, justice and wisdom are always in absolute balance. (1 John 4:8, 16; Ps. 62:11; Deut. 32:4; Job 12:13) Humans, with finite minds, may not always understand divine dealings, but Jehovah is indeed the very Paragon of self-control.—Dan. 4:34, 35; Isa. 55:8, 9.

4 But why place so much emphasis on self-control? Well, consider this: One lacking this quality may react unfavorably, undependably, under pressure. And persons have little confidence in the advice offered by an individual who is given to extremes. So, Christian ministers, "let your reasonableness become known to all men. The Lord is near." A Christian whose reasonableness is known to all his acquaintances, one who lives "with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things," will be viewed as mature, dependable, a person whose counsel, based on the sure Word of God, is worthy of credence. (Phil. 4:5; Titus 2:11, 12) Such a person with self-control can be entrusted with responsibility within the Christian congregation. On the other hand, the lack of sufficient self-control may pose problems and necessitate the giving of correction to the immoderate one. Therefore, it behooves any Christian to develop and display self-

3. With respect to self-control, why can Christians look heavenward?

4. Contrast persons who have Christian self-control with those who do not possess it.

control. But just what progress is possible for Christians who have this quality?

PROGRESS POSSIBLE FOR SELF-CONTROLLED MEN

5 In the first century of our Common Era, the apostle Paul left Titus in Crete that he "might correct the things that were defective and might make appointments of older men in city after city." (Titus 1:5) Self-controlled men were needed to serve in such capacities. Paul wrote: "For an overseer must be free from accusation as God's steward, not self-willed, not prone to wrath, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, not greedy of dishonest gain, but hospitable, a lover of goodness, sound in mind, righteous, loyal, *self-controlled.*" (Titus 1:7, 8) Such a man was not an extremist. He was not self-willed. You would not find him enmeshed in drunken neighborhood brawls. He was no smiter. His self-command was also shown in that he was "not greedy of dishonest gain." The man who would qualify for oversight, in whom fellow believers could place confidence and trust, must be "a lover of goodness." He was to be hospitable and must be "sound in mind." Especially must he display self-control. With it he could avoid rash or unchristian attitudes and actions.

6 Yet, Crete was but a relatively small island in the Great or Mediterranean Sea. The good news was "bearing fruit and increasing in all the world." No longer being restricted to the Jews, it was reaching the people of the nations, Gentiles once alienated from God. (Col. 1:5, 6, 21-23) As Christian missionary evangelizers penetrated into new territory, the need for more mature men with self-control increased, for new congregations were formed. And how much greater is that need today! The good news of God's established kingdom is being heralded earth wide. Hence, the need for Christian overseers and ministerial servants who possess God's spirit as expressed in balanced Christian living and self-control is even greater today. This need will grow as there is further expansion and development of Jehovah's earthly organization. Therefore, let Christian men press on in developing self-control and the other fruits of God's spirit. Progress, including privileges of serving as overseers and ministerial servants in newly formed congregations, is open to mature, self-controlled Christian men.

7 A Christian overseer in Crete, as elsewhere, should be "self-controlled, holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching." Why? "That he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict." (Titus 1:8, 9) He must have accurate knowledge of God's Word in order to impart exhortation, teaching that which is healthful. Sometimes Christians have serious problems and find it difficult to weigh these matters of great concern without assistance. Consequently, they may consult with a mature brother, such as the congregation overseer. If a person does so, it is vitally important that he receive sound counsel rooted in the Scriptures. Hence, overseers and other servants in the congregation need self-control. They must not be swayed by sentimentality or some other beclouding emotion, for their words may well affect precious lives. Those having the responsibility of oversight, if appealed to for counsel and aid, should consider Biblical laws and principles, pointing these out to inquirers, who must then make their own decisions. (Gal. 6:5) So,

5. What kind of men was Titus to appoint? What quality were they especially to display?
6. What has increased the need for self-controlled Christian men, and so what should Christian men do?
7. Why is self-control needed by overseers and other servants in the Christian congregation?

if a Biblical law or principle is involved in a matter, it must be viewed from the Scriptural standpoint by the overseer. Though a situation is critical and the pressure intense, overseers must be careful that they do not make comments that reflect a lack of self-control.

[8] A Christian does not always find it necessary to discuss a problem with the congregation overseer. Often it can be resolved privately by a direct personal appeal to the Scriptures, along with prayer to Jehovah. But if you have a serious problem and must make a decision, remember self-control. Resist any tendency toward impetuosity or presumptuousness. No matter how weighty the decision or how difficult the circumstance, maintain self-command. Think before you act or speak, for "it is a snare when earthling man has rashly cried out, 'Holy!' and after vows he is disposed to make examination." (Prov. 20:25) Meditate and pray before reaching a conclusion or making a solemn agreement. (Eccl. 5:2-5) Do not lean on your own understanding. Call to mind the reminders of Jehovah in his Word and act on these. Remember: "The law of Jehovah is perfect, bringing back the soul. The reminder of Jehovah is trustworthy, making the inexperienced one wise."—Ps. 19:7; Prov. 3:1-6.

CONGREGATION JUDICIAL COMMITTEE

[9] Of course, problems within the Christian congregation may vary considerably. Therefore, at times, though he is not directly sought out for aid, an overseer may make efforts to restore a man who has erred in some way. In fact, the congregation judicial committee may be required to handle the matter. The apostle Paul told Titus to appoint men who were able to "reprove those who contradict." (Titus 1:9) That could not be accomplished by a vacillating, uncertain man lacking self-control. So this sterling quality is needed by the overseer and the entire congregation judicial committee. Paul told the Galatians: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to restore such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted. Go on carrying the burdens of one another, and thus fulfill the law of the Christ." (Gal. 6:1, 2) No emotional, impassioned judgment, no uncontrolled, ill-advised remarks should be forthcoming. Those with spiritual qualifications should not yield to imperfect human inclinations toward intemperate words or deeds. Such yielding would only stand in the way of rendering real spiritual assistance.

[10] Without doubt, the congregation judicial committee needs self-control, so as to act on principle and not emotion. If dedicated Christians have sinned but manifest true repentance following some misdeed that calls for disciplinary action, such contrition should not be ignored. However, sentimentality must not be permitted to override Scriptural principle when decisions are made that affect the welfare and cleanliness of the Christian congregation. At times repentance for gross wrongdoing is totally lacking, this necessitating the disfellowshiping of the offender. Acting in accord with Paul's inspired counsel, responsible ones in the Corinthian congregation of old had sufficient courage to oust a man guilty of incestuous immorality, so that the congregation might not be hurt spiritually. Only after true repentance was

8. What should be done in making a personal decision or solemn agreement?
9. Against what should the overseer and congregation judicial committee guard in endeavoring to restore one who has erred?
10. (a) In order to do what does the committee need self-control? (b) What steps should the committee take when repentance for gross wrongdoing is lacking? when it is manifested?

manifested could they be encouraged to extend forgiveness and confirm their love for this person. (1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:1-11) The congregation judicial committee of today must exercise self-control so as to avoid harshness when mildness and love are called for, or indecision and weakness when firmness and determination are essential.

SELF-CONTROL VITAL FOR WOMEN, OTHERS

[11] Self-control is certainly a must in resolving personal and congregational problems in a proper manner. Also, the exercise of this fine quality may lead to increased privileges for Christian men. But self-control is needed by all Christians who wish to progress. Godly women who have it are a real asset to the congregation. Benefits resulting from a Christian woman's exercise of self-control may first be felt in the home. The capable Christian wife who has it is a good example in word and deed. She is like the good woman but very much unlike the bad woman of whom it was written: "A capable wife is a crown to her owner, but as rottenness in his bones is she that acts shamefully." (Prov. 12:4) The Christian wife and mother who cares for her household duties and her children and who has at heart the interests of God's kingdom is kept safe from the pursuits of idle women who lack self-control. Unlike them, she does not meddle in the affairs of others, does not gossip or become ensnared in misconduct. Instead, she keeps busy in proper pursuits and thus proves to be a blessing to her husband, her children and all her associates. —1 Tim. 2:15; 5:11-15.

[12] A Christian woman who displays self-control can also expand her ministry. She may be privileged to assist other women in the preaching work under the direction of the overseer and in keeping with the congregational arrangement for offering training and personal assistance. It is apparent, however, that, if a dedicated woman lacks self-control and constantly goes to extremes in dress or demeanor, she could not be used to aid other women in the ministry. (1 Tim. 2:9, 10; 1 Pet. 3: 3, 4) If she wrangles with other women in the congregation, perhaps even regarding petty matters, what kind of an example does she set? Not a good one. So, if a Christian woman wishes to make progress toward maturity and to be in a position to take on the privilege of giving some assistance in ministerial service, to Jehovah's praise, she must cultivate and display self-control.

[13] But, then, what of elderly persons in the Christian congregation? They too need self-control. And if they have it, they may be able to help others. Just think of the years of experience an older Christian may have had in God's service and of resulting benefits. Understandably, many who have served Jehovah faithfully for a number of years are often turned to for aid by younger, less experienced Christians. These must make their own decisions, but at times an elderly dedicated servant of Jehovah can be of assistance by drawing on personal experience and by directing attention to Biblical principles, thereby benefiting the inquirer.

[14] However, advancing age may bring problems with poor health and diminishing vigor. Therefore, elderly Christians need to cultivate self-control, so that they will remain joyful despite their hardships. How often we find that older persons of

11. What kind of person is a Christian wife who has self-control, and against what is she protected?
12. How can a Christian woman who displays self-control expand her ministry?
13. How can elderly Christians who have self-control help others?
14. (a) Why is it a pleasure to associate with *older* persons in the New World society? (b) Though some older Christians may not be able to *do as much as* they once did in Jehovah's service, how can they contribute to the advancement of the preaching work?

this system of things are out of sorts, cranky, difficult to please! There is little pleasure in associating with them. But older individuals in the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses cultivate and display self-control and so it is a pleasure to speak with them and to have them as associates in the ministry. True, today some of them may not be able to do as much as they once did in Jehovah's service. But self-control enables them to make progress toward greater spirituality, and even silently, by their steadfastness and exemplary conduct, they spur younger ones on in Christian activity. The many true-life accounts of elderly witnesses of Jehovah published in *The Watchtower* serve as a source of real encouragement. Indeed, in many ways older Christians are making a fine contribution to the advancement of the work of preaching the good news of the Kingdom.—Prov. 16:31.

[15] But what about youngsters—you boys and girls? Why, if you display self-control, you will bring happiness to your parents. Many children of this wicked system of things lack self-control and act foolishly, creating problems for their parents. Actually, they are stupid. Who would want to be like them? Proverbs 17:25 says: "A stupid son is a vexation to his father and a bitterness to her that gave him birth." On the other hand, if, as a Christian youngster, you develop self-control, you will win the approval of Jehovah, your parents and others, in all likelihood. How you act means a great deal, for "even by his practices a boy makes himself recognized as to whether his activity is pure and upright." (Prov. 20:11) If you are a young Christian with self-control, probably you will be given privileges and some responsibilities in the home. Even at the congregation meeting place, the Kingdom Hall, you may be able to help in cleaning or may be given other things to do, if you show that you can be trusted to handle matters well. Cultivating self-control will also enable you to advance to greater capability. So, young ones, self-control is vital to your Christian progress too.

15. What may result if Christian youngsters display self-control?

DISPLAY SELF-CONTROL AND CONTINUE TO PROGRESS

[16] It is evident, therefore, that all Christians can benefit by developing and displaying self-control. With it all dedicated servants of God can improve their ministry, the quality of their service to Jehovah and their worship in general. Many are the incentives toward displaying Christian self-control. Mature persons manifesting this fruit of Jehovah's holy spirit act in ways that contribute to the unity and advancement of God's earthly organization. They do not cause problems or act as disrupting influences within the Christian congregation. Also, whereas those lacking self-control cannot be given greater responsibility, if you have this quality, you are more likely to be able to shoulder it. You can be trusted to take a balanced view of matters when decisions must be made. You can thus expand your ministry and reap increased joys and blessings.

[17] However, not only is self-control vital to your Christian progress today. Actually, it is essential to your gaining life in God's promised new order. Paul wrote: "Moreover, if anyone contends even in the games, he is not crowned unless he has contended according to the rules." (2 Tim. 2:5) To gain Jehovah's approval and everlasting life, we must meet his requirements, complying with his rules. So, "let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endur-

16. How can all Christians benefit by developing and displaying self-control?
17. Self-control is vital to Christian progress today, but what other reason is there for displaying it?

ance the race that is set before us, as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus." (Heb. 12: 1, 2) Imitate his course. He manifested self-control. One who professes to follow Christ while deliberately ignoring the need for self-control may well fail in his race for the prize of everlasting life. Why, he could no more hope to win in it than the athlete of ancient times could expect to come off a victor if he scorned discipline and exercised no self-command. Of course, one Christian cannot and should not judge another. (Rom. 14:4) But be assured that Jehovah "judges impartially according to each one's work." (1 Pet. 1:17) Therefore, how very hard each Christian should work at cultivating and manifesting the fruits of Jehovah's spirit, including self-control! One's life is at stake!

[18] Even now a Christian can determine if he is running the race for life in such a way as to have the hope of gaining this prize. In what proved to be the twilight of his earthly life, after enduring much more than any athlete of his day, Paul was able to say: "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith. From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me as a reward in that day, yet not only to me, but also to all those who have loved his manifestation." (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) The apostle was already confident that he had run the Christian race faithfully and that he would receive the "crown of righteousness," which has by now been conferred upon Paul and other spirit-begotten Christians who have proved faithful to death. But, whether your hopes are heavenly or earthly, you should be displaying self-control and running in such a manner as to have confidence that you have Jehovah's approval and will gain everlasting life, if only you continue in your present godly, self-controlled course.

[19] Be determined, therefore, to show self-control. Be an asset to Jehovah's earthly organization. Do this whether you are an elderly person, a younger adult, or a child. Of course, to gain and maintain self-control requires effort, great effort at times. But it is vital to your Christian progress. Furthermore, it may mean your very life. Hence, there is good reason indeed to "supply to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, to your knowledge self-control."—2 Pet. 1:5, 6.

18. Even now a Christian can determine what?

19. Why is there good reason to "supply to your faith . . . self-control"?

THEY WOULD EAT NO BLOOD

Minucius Felix, a Latin writer of the third century of our Common Era, wrote a dialogue entitled "Octavius." In it he sought to refute charges brought against professed Christians of his day. One story that had been circulated was that they drank blood, being "initiated by the slaughter and blood of an infant." After outlining pagan practices that showed gross disregard for life and the sanctity of blood, Minucius Felix showed that those avowing Christianity at that time had respect for God's law on blood. He wrote: "They [the heathen] also are not unlike to him who devour the wild beasts from the arena, besmeared and stained with blood, or fattened with the limbs or the entrails of men. To us it is not lawful either to see or to hear of homicide; and so much do we shrink from human blood, that we do not use the blood even of eatable animals in our food." (The Octavius of Minucius Felix, Chap. XXX, as published in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume IV, pages 191, 192) It is noteworthy that as late as the third century C.E. those claiming to follow Christ possessed an attitude toward blood that was Scriptural and not unlike that of true Christians today.—Gen. 9:3, 4; Acts 15:28, 29; 21:25.

Can ANY WAR Be WHOLLY JUST?

NOW as never before in man's history a question has come to the fore with the strong voice of demand for an answer: "Is any war just?" As we review the wars of mundane history we find that nearly all of them were useless, certainly cruel and inhuman in the extreme degree, and a great many turned out as a loss for both sides. It was General Sherman, a victorious commander, who said of war: "It is all hell." In our time we have heard many outspoken protests. We have seen organized demonstrations by persons who feel that there is no war that truly can be called right or just.

But then the logical reasoning arises: With selfishness and wickedness in the earth, how can persons who love what is just and who would like to have peace live without war? 'Why,' say they, 'if we don't fight, all liberty and rights would be taken away from men.' In this they are right; there are many enemies of righteousness and justice. Does it require war to maintain justice in the earth? What kind of war? At whose direction? Can there be a just war to end all wars?

WHY THERE HAS TO BE A JUST WAR

The Bible expresses in a few words the principle involved: "The wicked is a ransom for the righteous one; and the one dealing treacherously takes the place of the upright ones." (Prov. 21:18) In other words, the only way that upright ones can have true enjoyment of life as the Creator purposed is for the wicked to pay with their lives —all the wicked. Clear them out of the way so that they will not hinder righteousness in the earth! But who is to determine who are the wicked ones? and who is able to clear them out for earth's benefit? None of men's wars have yet done that, for even if fought for a right cause they are not selective but kill indiscriminately both those who are good and those who are bad and sometimes spare the most wicked ones. Nonetheless, the Bible principle still remains firm. Such a war must be fought. It is very easy to see that the direction and execution of the war would have to be by someone with far more wisdom and power than man has.

Such a war would necessarily be gory and would be cruel to those who deserved to be cleared off the earth. (Isa. 13:9) Once done, it would be a fine and just thing, and if the one who accomplishes such a work can afterward rule over those who desire justice, righteousness and peace, we surely could expect lasting peace. The Bible describes this very war, which can truly be called a war to end all wars. In the previous issue of this magazine we have discussed the qualifications *required* for the leader and commander of the victorious army. If the reader will consider Revelation, chapter 19, verses 11 to 16, discussed in that issue, he will be better prepared for what is to be said here.

FALL OF FALSE RELIGION NOT ARMAGEDDON

The war that will accomplish such a wonderful thing is described in the Bible

and is titled "Har–Magedon" (Armageddon). The Bible indicates that this final war comes after the false religious empire of the earth, or Babylon the Great, is destroyed. So it will not be one false religion against another. Babylon was on the Euphrates River, and Babylon the Great is likewise pictured that way in Revelation. (16:12) The fight in which false religion is destroyed comes first, in what might be called the Battle of Babylon, or the Battle of the Euphrates. At Armageddon the rulers of earth are not shown as gathering at the Euphrates but, from the name Har–Magedon, seem to be at Megiddo, which is located more than 500 miles west of Babylon. (Rev. 16:14, 16) Another factor to consider is that the priests or the religious clergy are not involved—only the kings of the earth—because the religious organization is already gone. (Rev. 19:19) Therefore, the destruction of Babylon the Great is no part of Armageddon but the battle of Har–Magedon immediately follows it.

In God's execution of judgment against the false religious empire of this earth he permitted the kings of the earth to be his instruments, venting their rage upon her, but not destroying His witnesses on earth. Once started on their destructive course in the frenzy of their anger, they do not stop but next turn directly against God's witnesses because they are proclaiming that sovereignty belongs to God and that his kingdom will rule. This brings the rulers into a direct clash with the 'Lamb of God,' his Son-King Jesus Christ, who is his Chief Executive Officer and Warrior. (Rev. 17:14) In fighting against God's witnesses whom they can see, they are really fighting against that which they cannot see, the heavenly army, and therefore do not stand a chance of victory. The Scriptures describe how decisively and thoroughly they are defeated.

A CLOSER VIEW OF THE FIGHT

Speaking of the victorious army under Jesus Christ, Revelation says: "He treads too the press of the wine of the anger of the wrath of God the Almighty." (Rev. 19:15) This global winepress will crush the political vine of the earth with all its political branches, huge clusters of grapes, wicked deeds and oppression, which are the fruitage produced by their kingdoms. Grapes are usually crushed at wine-making by human feet, but not so with the vine of the earth. God threshes with horses' hoofs the product of this vine. The Word of God and his heavenly armies leap into the winepress and stamp it out until they completely express the "anger of the wrath of God the Almighty." It is a time of victory, and just as in Palestine wine-making was a festive time, the treaders will doubtless shout and sing as they trample out the grapes. (Jer. 25:30; 48:33) It will result in a terrible destruction, but it will be selective, Jehovah God destroying only those who really are against him and his kingdom and the interests of all men.—Rev. 14:18-20; Joel 3:12-17.

Impressing upon us the reality and literalness of this war to end wars, the vision given to the apostle John continues: "I saw also an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice and said to all the birds that fly in midheaven: 'Come here, be gathered together to the great evening meal of God, that you may eat the fleshy parts of kings and the fleshy parts of military commanders and the fleshy parts of strong men and the fleshy parts of horses and of those seated upon them, and the fleshy parts of all, of freemen as well as of slaves and of small ones and great.' "—Rev. 19:17, 18; compare Ezekiel 39:17-21.

In Bible times persons who were considered as deserving of a *resurrection* were given a respectful burial. The ones

slaughtered at Armageddon are shown as being left as food for the carrion-eating birds of the heavens. They will not be buried with military honors nor have graves with markers to memorialize them for mourners and idolizers. Those destroyed in this war will not be mourned, for the reason that they have shown themselves undeserving of mercy. By their removal the earth is cleansed.—Jer. 25:31-33; Num. 35:33.

A practical literal benefit will come because of allowing the birds to clean the bones of these enemies of God—a health benefit. Many have been the epidemics that have been caused by the wholesale destruction and devastation of past wars. The air will not be polluted by the smell nor the water contaminated by these dead corpses. Those who survive, being unable to bury such great numbers, will not be in danger of decimation by disease epidemic. Jesus, when on earth, told his disciples: "Wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together." (Matt. 24:28) This victory will be a feast, not only for the literal birds, but also, in a sense, for those who survive, for they will feast because of the end of wickedness. They will appreciate God's protection and provision for them. In this way it can be called the "great evening meal of God."

ORGANIZATION BROKEN UP

In John's vision he was able to see the battle array against the heavenly warrior Jesus Christ. It is formidable. John says: "And I saw the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage the war with the one seated on the horse and with his army." (Rev. 19:19) The lineup on one side will be the political organizations on earth under Satan's control, including the kings of the earth and all those military forces that owe allegiance to them. On the other side no earthly ones are seen with military equipment. Why? It will be the armies in heaven that will fight against the political organization. This is more than sufficient. The results are described:

"And the wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received the mark of the wild beast and those who render worship to its image. While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulphur."—Rev. 19:20.

The "wild beast" got its power and its throne and great authority from the dragon. The "false prophet," being the symbolic seventh head of the political wild beast, automatically gets authority in connection with the "wild beast." This head represents the Anglo-American World Power, as the final actual world power of this system of things. True, there is an eighth, but it is merely a combine of the powers of earth and an image of the original wild beast expressed in the League of Nations, now the U.N. (Rev. 17:11) The Anglo-American World Power is called the "false prophet" because it holds a dominant position in the world's political system and presumes to speak for it, speaking "as a dragon," that is, like the Devil.—Rev. 13:1, 2, 11-15.

At Armageddon the "false prophet" will be proven false. He has claimed always to fight only a just war, and falsely called World War I the war to end all wars. He has taken the lead in pointing the people to the image of the beast, the U.N., and proclaimed it to be the world's last hope of peace, which amounts really to an official declaration against the kingdom of God.

The "wild beast" and the "false prophet" will be caught alive, "red-handed," as it were, while engaging in their bloody

fight against Jehovah's witnesses on earth. All the blood they have shed in human history will now be required of them. (Gen. 9:5) Raging at their captivity, the "wild beast" and the "false prophet" will savagely, in desperation, try to break loose, but they will be unable to tear apart the bands that hold them or the cords tying them. Jehovah God will laugh at their wild efforts.—Ps. 2:1-4.

How will these, having been caught, be disposed of? Will they be preserved alive? Will they be killed and buried in Hades or Sheol, which is the common grave of dead mankind, from which resurrection is possible? No, these political organizations are slated to be "hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulphur." This the Bible describes as the "second death." (Rev. 20:14) It means the death from which there is no resurrection. They will be burned up root and branch, as completely gone forever as the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which Jehovah God burned up by a rain of fire and sulphur from heaven, never to be rebuilt. It is destruction in Gehenna in which God destroys both body and soul (any right or possibility of living).—Matt. 10:28; Gen. 19:23-29; 2 Pet. 2:6-9; Jude 7.

The Bible shows that, after these political *organizations* are burned up, there will still be kings of the earth and their armies remaining. Without organization, all world unity and political authority and all political alliances will be broken down. Imagine this brief time when there is no control, restraint or direction! It follows that there will be wild confusion and disorder. They will madly fight one another, as took place in days of old. (2 Chron. 20:23; Zech. 14:13) Jesus Christ while on earth foretold it, saying: "There will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again. In fact, unless those days were cut short, no flesh would be saved; but on account of the chosen ones [the remnant of the 144,000 yet on earth] those days will be cut short."—Matt. 24:21, 22, 38, 39.

TWO DESTINIES

What is the fate of those who live through this? They are to be killed off in execution of their death sentence pronounced by the "long sword" out of the mouth of the victorious King of kings. This will not include the "flesh" that is to be saved, for, to be sure, the heavenly army under Christ will not kill true Christians. They will be "concealed" by Jehovah's hand.—Zeph. 2:3; Isa. 26:20, 21.

Such a war, you may say, is terrible to contemplate. True, it is, but that is all the more reason to take steps to avoid being on the wrong side, for the war is inevitable. It is mandatory for justice' sake. God's decree is that it must come to clean wickedness from the earth once for all time. God is the Judge of matchless perfection and he knows those who serve him and those whose hearts are turned toward righteousness. He also knows those who are wickedly bent and hardened toward him, just as he knew Pharaoh of old.

From the foregoing it is clear that there will indeed be a just war. It will not be a war prosecuted according to man's standard of justice, but by the perfect standard of God's justice. While it will destroy many, such ones will be those who deserve destruction. But think what it will mean for survivors and the earth's future inhabitants, among whom will be many who have been slaughtered in the unjust and unrighteous warfares of past history, brought back by a resurrection. The Bible says: "When there are judgments from you [Jehovah] for the earth, righteousness is what the inhabitants of the productive land will certainly learn." "He will

judge the productive land with righteousness and the peoples with his faithfulness." (Isa. 26:9; Ps. 96:13) Yes, the war of Armageddon will clear the earth of the enemies of God and man. Of the reign of his Warrior-Son, who will also be the everlasting King, Jehovah himself has prophesied: "To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this."—Isa. 9:6, 7.

Peter

—COLORFUL APOSTLE WHO TOOK THE INITIATIVE

OF THE twelve apostles that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, chose to accompany him, Peter was by far the most colorful. Warmhearted and impulsive, frank and outspoken—we cannot help liking him. It is easy for us to put ourselves in his place; to feel for him.

Peter was a man of action, quick to speak his thoughts, quick to act out his feelings. Because of his emotional nature he readily went from one extreme to another. As a result it was his lot to know the extremes both of sorrow and of joy. His was the joy to hear his Master highly commend him for having said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and to receive the keys of the kingdom of the heavens. But his was also the keen grief of seeing his Master give him a look of reproach and sorrow for having denied him three times. —Matt. 16:16-19; Luke 22:61, 62.

Above all else, Peter had a good, honest heart. He was as far removed from the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees of his day as one could possibly be. To steal secretly from the common treasury of Jesus' intimate group, as did Judas, would have been unthinkable for Peter. And because of Peter's good heart God granted him repentance and recovery, things denied the dishonest traitor, Judas. God not only restored Peter to his favor, after his denial of Jesus, but greatly used him thereafter.—John 12:4-6.

Peter was the son of John. He is first shown as residing at Bethsaida, on the Sea of Galilee near the Jordan River. Later we read of his being in Capernaum, where he and his brother Andrew were in the fishing business, he having his own boat. Though the religious leaders referred to Peter and the apostle John as "unlearned and ordinary," they, as businessmen who had dealings with both Jews

and Greek-speaking Gentiles, doubtless could read and write both Hebrew and Greek. Peter was married, and at least in his later years his wife accompanied him on his missionary travels.—Matt. 8:14; 16:17; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:3; Acts 4:13; 1 Cor. 9:5.

Peter appears early in Jesus' ministry when he first became a disciple or "learner," and when Jesus changed his name from Simon, meaning "hearing," to Peter, "a piece of rock." About six months later he became a full-time disciple and follower of Jesus, when he and his brother Andrew, together with their cousins James and John, left their fishing business to become "fishers of men." Well over a year later Peter was chosen, along with eleven others, to be an apostle, a "sent forth one."—John 1:35-44; Matt. 4:18-22; 10:1-4.

IMPULSIVE—QUICK TO ACT

Repeatedly in the Gospels we find examples of Peter's impulsive nature. When Jesus caused Peter and those with him to have a miraculous catch of fish, just before his calling them to be full-time disciples, it was just too much for Peter. He "fell down at the knees of Jesus, saying: 'Depart from me, because I am a sinful man, Lord.'" When Peter saw his Master walking on the water, he was eager to do the same, and actually did until his faith weakened. When a mob, armed with clubs and swords and led by religious leaders, came to take Jesus, Peter again was quick *to act*, seeking to protect his Master by means of the literal sword, but succeeding only in slicing off the ear of one of the mob. And later, after Jesus' death and resurrection, when Jesus again caused Peter and his companions to have a miraculous catch of fish, and Peter learned that it was Jesus who stood on the shore, Peter at once plunged into the sea and swam to shore, not wanting to wait with the rest until they had slowly pulled the net full of fish to land.—Luke 5:6-9; Matt. 14:26-31; John 18:10, 11; 21:1-8.

Peter's ardor and impulsiveness were such as to cause him at times to contradict his Master, thus evincing a lack of due modesty, humble though he was. Thus he felt free to raise strong objections to Jesus' remarks about his destined suffering and death, making it necessary for Jesus to reprove him severely with the words: "Get behind me, Satan!" Further, when Jesus, because strength had gone out of him to cure a certain woman, asked, "Who was it that touched me?" it was Peter who felt free to correct Jesus by saying: "Instructor, the crowds are hemming you in and closely pressing you." In other words, 'Why, Jesus, of course people are touching you!' And was it not Peter who first objected to his dear Master's washing his feet, only to want Jesus to wash his head and hands also after hearing Jesus' reply?—Matt. 16:21-23; Luke 8:43-45; John 13:1-10.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE

Peter, by his various names, Simon, Symeon, Simon Peter, Peter and Cephas, is mentioned in the inspired record more frequently than are his eleven apostolic companions combined, or about as often as is the apostle Paul. He is the first one mentioned of those whom Jesus called to the full-time discipleship and whenever Peter is named with these other apostles he invariably comes first, and this is so whether all twelve are named (the rest are not always named in the same order), or only four, three or two of the apostles. —Matt. 10:2; Mark 13:3; Luke 9:28; 22:8.

It is in keeping with the foregoing, therefore, that we find Peter *speaking up* of his own initiative more frequently than

the other eleven put together, whether on his own behalf or on behalf of the rest. Thus it is Peter who asks: "Lord, how many times is my brother to sin against me and am I to forgive him?" It is Peter who suggests erecting three tents while he and James and John are in the Mount of Transfiguration. And it is Peter who observes the effect of Jesus' curse upon a certain fig tree: "Rabbi, see! the fig tree that you cursed has withered up." —Matt. 18:21; 17:4; Mark 11:21.

As for Peter speaking out in behalf of the twelve: When Jesus asked them all, "You [plural], though, who do you say I am?" it is Peter who responds with confidence: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And when many of Jesus' disciples took offense at what Jesus had said and had left him, and Jesus asked the twelve if they also were going to leave him, it is Peter who replies: "Lord, whom shall *we* go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life." Again, after Jesus gave an illustration, it is Peter who requests: "Make the illustration plain to *us*." And likewise it is Peter who speaks on behalf of the twelve, asking: "What actually will there be for us," who have left all to follow you?—Matt. 16:15-17; John 6:67, 68; Matt. 15:15; 19:27.

Forward as Peter was, because of his impulsive nature, his ardor and zeal, he was not designingly ambitious. It was not he but James and John, his two closest companions, who, together with their mother, asked Jesus for the chief seats in his kingdom. (Matt. 20:20-24; Mark 10:35-41) Jesus, therefore, did not consider Peter's forwardness a serious flaw that he would correct by studiously ignoring Peter, setting him in his place, as it were. But, recognizing Peter's good qualities, Jesus granted him special privileges. He was among the three apostles who were with Jesus at the time of the transfiguration vision and at the time of his raising of Jairus' daughter and in the garden of Gethsemane.—Matt. 17:1; 26:36, 37; Mark 5:35-42.

Then, again, it was with Peter that Jesus on one occasion discussed the question of paying taxes and whom he caused to catch a fish in whose mouth Peter found the necessary coin to pay the temple tax. (Matt. 17:24-27) Jesus especially prayed for Peter and commissioned him to strengthen his brothers. Peter most likely was also the first of the apostles to whom Jesus showed himself after his resurrection and later it was to Peter that Jesus gave the repeated admonition to feed his lambs and his little sheep. And, as already noted, it was to Peter that Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom.—Mark 16:7; Luke 22:32; 24:34; John 21:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:5.

AFTER JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

It was, therefore, but to be expected that after Jesus' resurrection, when he was no longer continuously with his disciples, Peter would take the initiative, and this he did, both in personal matters and in executing the divine commission. Thus it was Peter who took the initiative in choosing a successor for Judas after Jesus had ascended into heaven and while they were waiting for the holy spirit. And so when the holy spirit was poured out upon the 120 disciples gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem we see Peter, true to the commission given him, taking the lead in preaching to the Jews about Jesus, his resurrection and the meaning of what had taken place that day. He thereby used the first of the keys of the kingdom that Jesus had entrusted to him, to unlock to the Jews knowledge of the opportunity to become members of the heavenly kingdom.—Acts 1:15-26; 2:1-41.

When the religious rulers haled the apostles before them because of their

preaching about Jesus Christ, it was Peter who took the initiative in speaking. When Ananias and Sapphira brought their contribution, we read that they presented it to the apostles. But it was Peter whom Jehovah God used to expose their dishonesty in representing it as being the total value of the property they had sold when it was not and to pronounce upon them God's judgment, as a result of which both fell dead. And it appears that Peter also had greater power for healing than others, for we read that even his shadow effected cures; his power being similar to that possessed by the apostle Paul in this regard.—Acts 5:1-29; 19:11, 12.

When the older men at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria so that the converts there might receive the holy spirit, Peter again is shown as taking the initiative. This is indicated by the fact that, although Simon offered "them" money for the power to impart the holy spirit to others, it was Peter who sternly rebuked him. From this incident originated the name "simony," meaning the buying of church offices for money; a practice very widespread in the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages.—Acts 8:14-24.

Incidentally, the fact that others "sent" or dispatched Peter and John to Samaria clearly indicates that Peter's taking the initiative did not give him authority over others. Nowhere is he shown as exercising authority over the other apostles nor are the others shown as giving him deference as the prince or chief of the apostles.

After Peter performed several more miracles, we next learn of his using the second key of the kingdom to bring the good news to the first uncircumcised Gentile to be converted to Christianity, the Roman army officer Cornelius of Caesarea. By means of a vision in which Peter was repeatedly commanded to eat animals that were unclean according to the Law of Moses, God gently prepared the mind of Peter for this radical change in God's dealing with peoples—no longer were the uncircumcised people unclean in God's sight. Returning to Jerusalem, Peter had to face strong opposition by the Jewish Christians there, but he stood his ground, explained how God had prepared him for this change and what had taken place. As a result, the Jewish Christians rejoiced that God was now granting repentance and the Kingdom hope also to the Gentiles. —Acts 10:1–11:18.

Apparently not long after this, King Herod Agrippa had Peter arrested to please the Jews, but God sent his angel to free Peter, for God had more work for Peter to do. Upon being released from prison Peter reported to the local congregation, which had met in the home of John Mark to pray for Peter, and then he went "to another place." (Acts 12:1-17) From then on the colorful and impulsive apostle Peter is eclipsed in the inspired record of the book of Acts by the apostle Paul, and we no more read of Peter therein except at the meeting of the governing body of Christians in Jerusalem to consider the question as to whether Gentile converts to Christianity needed to be circumcised. On that occasion Peter related how Jehovah had used him to bring the good news to the Gentiles as proof that God no longer was making any distinction between Jew and Gentile and urged that they should not fasten a yoke upon these Gentile Christians that they themselves had been unable to bear.—Acts 15: 7-11.

For further information about Peter we need to turn to his letters and particularly those of the apostle Paul. From Paul's letters we learn that Peter resided for some years in Jerusalem, also in Antioch, and that Peter had not changed much but was still given to being swayed by emo-

tion. How so? In that he was ashamed to be seen associating with Gentile Christians when certain Jewish Christians came down from Jerusalem; evidently such as did not fully appreciate that God no longer required circumcision. On that occasion Peter withdrew from his association with Gentile Christians—how hurt those Gentile Christians must have felt about that! Fittingly, for this Paul publicly rebuked him. Peter was chosen as head of a sect in Corinth and likely preached in the cities of northern Asia Minor that he mentions in his first letter.*—Gal. 1:17, 18; 2:1, 7-14; 1 Cor. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:1.

LESSONS FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY

Truly the Scriptural record of the apostle Peter is a most interesting one. Colorful and impulsive, he was certain to have his "ups" and "downs." His big, warm and honest heart made him quick to say and to act out what his fellow apostles most likely thought themselves. No doubt when they saw Jesus walking on the water they too thought, 'What a wonderful thing to be able to do that!' but it was only Peter who spoke and acted upon that sentiment by asking Jesus to enable him to do the same and then proceeding to do it! And most likely the others also were embarrassed when Jesus began to wash their feet, but only Peter spoke out, for it just did not seem right for his Master to be washing *his* feet! And in the garden of Gethsemane no doubt the others also felt righteous indignation, and at least one other had a sword, but it was Peter who impulsively acted in defense of his Master.

A review of Peter's colorful life is most upbuilding spiritually. Above all, it is faith-strengthening. For example, there is the candor displayed by all the Bible writers that tell us about Peter, the four writers of the Gospels and the apostle Paul, that stamps their accounts as truth. Here is a person specially chosen by the Son of God to enjoy outstanding privileges among the apostles and he is not spared in the least! Only in the Bible could we find such a convincingly true-to-life portrait of a person of such colorful contrasts, so strong and yet weak in some respects, yes, so much like so many of us! Here was an outspoken man, of strong faith and yet encumbered with the weaknesses of a strong emotional nature, impulsive, going from one extreme to the other. The Bible record does not glorify him nor does it make excuses for him. His own honesty shines through in the fact that the record that deals most severely with his shortcomings, that of Mark, is the one that is based on what he himself said! Truly it is an honest record.

There is also a lesson of faith and encouragement for all Christians in that Peter remained faithful to the end. In spite of his repeated mistakes, he did not get discouraged or get bitter and quit, and neither, for that matter, did Jehovah or his Master, Jesus Christ, get impatient with him and cast him off. What a lesson for Christians when induced to get discouraged because of having been overcome by a fault! But our repentance must be genuine as was Peter's, for we read that he "wept bitterly."—Matt. 26:75.

And in the account of Peter we also see the big-heartedness of his Master, Jesus Christ. Jesus did not reject Peter because of his impulsiveness. Jesus was at all times governed by principled love, *agape*, not by sentiment or personal feelings. Thus while he preferred the apostle John, having special affection for him, he gave Peter many wonderful privileges. Truly, there is much of profit to be found in considering the Bible record of such a person as the colorful apostle Peter!

* As for the claim that Peter went to Rome, see *The Watchtower*, March 1, 1966, pp. 150-155.

HOLD TO THE CUSTOM OF NOT NEGLECTING GOD'S HOUSE

"CUSTOM" is defined as "a habitual practice; the usual way of acting in given circumstances." As Christians our custom or habitual practice should be not to neglect God's house. As Nehemiah expressed it: "We should not neglect the house of our God." (Neh. 10:39) And as the apostle Paul counseled: "Hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering, . . . not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day [of Jehovah] drawing near."—Heb. 10:23-25.*

Jesus Christ when on earth as a man certainly made it his custom not to neglect God's house. While he preached in ever so many places, he made it his custom, his habitual practice, to be at the local synagogue or at Jerusalem's temple on the sabbath day. That is where he was obligated to be, and that is where the people were on that day, so Jesus used the opportunity to teach them the Word of God.—Matt. 13:54; Luke 4:16-21; John 18:19-21.

The apostle Paul imitated Jesus in this as in other features of Jesus' ministry. (1 Cor. 11:1) So we find that it also was his custom to go to the synagogue on the sabbath to find opportunities to preach and to teach. (Acts 13:14-16) And showing that he appreciated the need to associate with his brothers are his words found at Romans 1:11, 12: "I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you in order for you to be made firm; or, rather, that there may be an interchange of encouragement among you, by each one through the other's faith, both yours and mine."

Many religionists of Christendom go to their houses of worship only once or twice a year, but appreciative Christians do not follow such a custom with regard to their meetings. And while those religionists might content themselves with ritual and formalisms, we know that from the very beginning true Christians came together to hear God's Word preached. As one historian so well expressed it: "What is clearly apparent is that the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth was a *prophetic teaching*, of the new type that began with the Hebrew prophets. . . . Its only organization was an organization of preachers and its chief function was the sermon."

As dedicated Christian witnesses of Jehovah we today appreciate how important it is for us to heed the words of Paul, to feel as he did about associating with our brothers. That is why we should leave no stone unturned to come together regularly, to make it our custom, our habitual practice, to attend the five weekly congregational meetings. We know that at these meetings we learn the truth of God's Word and get to understand better his purposes and his will for us. And, equally important, at these meetings, and especially at the service meeting and the Theocratic Ministry School, we learn to express ourselves better; we receive training so that we might become able, tactful, effective and fruitful servants in the field ministry.

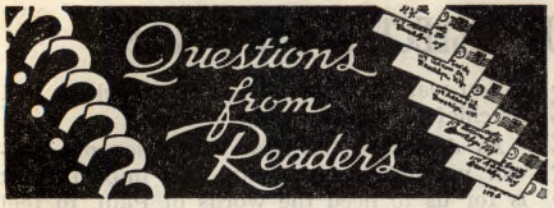
More than that, at these meetings we also learn to cooperate with one another; we receive practical help and find opportunities for bringing forth the fruits of the spirit. In particular will we be helped to cultivate the fruit of love, the *agape* kind of love, which has been defined as "spontaneous, self-giving love, expressed freely without calculation of cost or gain to the giver."

Is not that the way God gave his only-begotten Son, the dearest treasure of his heart, for sinful mankind, not deserving such a gift? And so we, too, want to be unselfish in our ministry, whether people are appreciative and deserving or not. Holding to the custom of not neglecting God's house will help us to cultivate this fruit of the spirit, *agape* love.—John 3:16; 1 Cor. 13:4-8.

However, let us not forget that not to neglect God's house includes more than supporting congregational meetings by attending and taking part in them. It also includes inviting others to worship at our Kingdom Halls with us, aiding them to get there as we may have opportunity. It also means supporting our Kingdom Halls by voluntary contributions and by helping to keep them neat and clean, and making it our custom to pray that God's blessing rest upon his house.—Ps. 122:6-9.

Happy are all those who make it their custom, their habitual practice, to imitate Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul in not neglecting God's house!

* For details see *The Watchtower*, January 1, 1966.



● The Bible account at Judges 18:27-29 says that a certain place was not named "Dan" until the Danites went up and took it. How is it, then, that the Bible book of Genesis speaks of the place as being called "Dan" in Abraham's time?

This city in the well-watered region in the extreme north of Palestine, prior to its capture by the tribe of Dan, was called Leshem or Laish by the pagan inhabitants. (Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:7, 27-29) The Danites rebuilt the destroyed city and called it "Dan by the name of their father, Dan." However, the city is mentioned some four centuries earlier by the name of "Dan" in the account of Abraham's pursuit of Chedorlaomer and his allies all the way "up to Dan." (Gen. 14:14) It is possible that this use of the name "Dan" at that early date may be related to the name of the river that has its source just below the city and which is known as Nahr el-Leddan.

Jerome, historian and Bible translator (*Comm. in Matt.* xiv, 13), was of the opinion that the name of the Jordan River derived from the river's having two sources, one named Jor and the other Dan, resulting in the united streams' being called "Jordan," which name was in use in Abraham's day. (Gen. 13:10) At any rate, there is nothing to argue against the existence of this name Dan as applying to the indicated area in the time of Abraham. The correspondence of this early name to that of the forefather of the tribe of Dan may have been coincidental or even divinely directed. —Compare the example of Salem at Genesis 14:18 and Hebrews 7:2.

The name "Dan" again appears in the Pentateuch at Deuteronomy 34:1, where it is included among the extremities of the territory seen by Moses in his final view of the Promised Land. The use of the name "Dan" here could correspond to its usage in the case of Abraham or could be the result of Joshua's recording the final portion of the book, which includes events following Moses' death.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

Over nineteen hundred years ago Jesus Christ said: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth." (Matt. 4:4) These words are as applicable today as when they were first spoken. Jehovah's Christian witnesses know this and so they realize that, to be spiritually nourished, it is important not to neglect the house of the true God. Regularly each week their meetings build them up spiritually and equip them to witness to others about God. During July, as they apply this training, they will be sharing with others one of the fine Bible-study aids that they use in their own congregation meetings. They will offer to all persons the book *Life Everlasting —in Freedom of the Sons of God*, with a booklet, for only 50c.

WHAT GOVERNS YOUR RELATIONS WITH OTHERS?

The ability to win friends and influence people is the desire and ambition of many sincere persons. Is it yours? Do you take into consideration with it how your efforts along these lines please God? Our relationship with others should concern us, but so should the principles that God has laid down in his Word, the Bible, to govern these relations. What Bible principles are involved in a happy marriage? How do they affect our choice of employment, our attitude toward political activities in the community and conflicts between nations? Read the hardbound book of 416 pages, *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God.* Sent at once, for only 50c. Write today and receive free the timely booklet *When God Is King over All the Earth.*

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

July 23: Developing and Displaying Self-Control, ¶1-23. Page 393. Songs to Be Used: 85, 75.

July 30: Developing and Displaying Self-Control, ¶24-26, and Self-Control Vital to Progress. Page 398. Songs to Be Used: 73, 94.