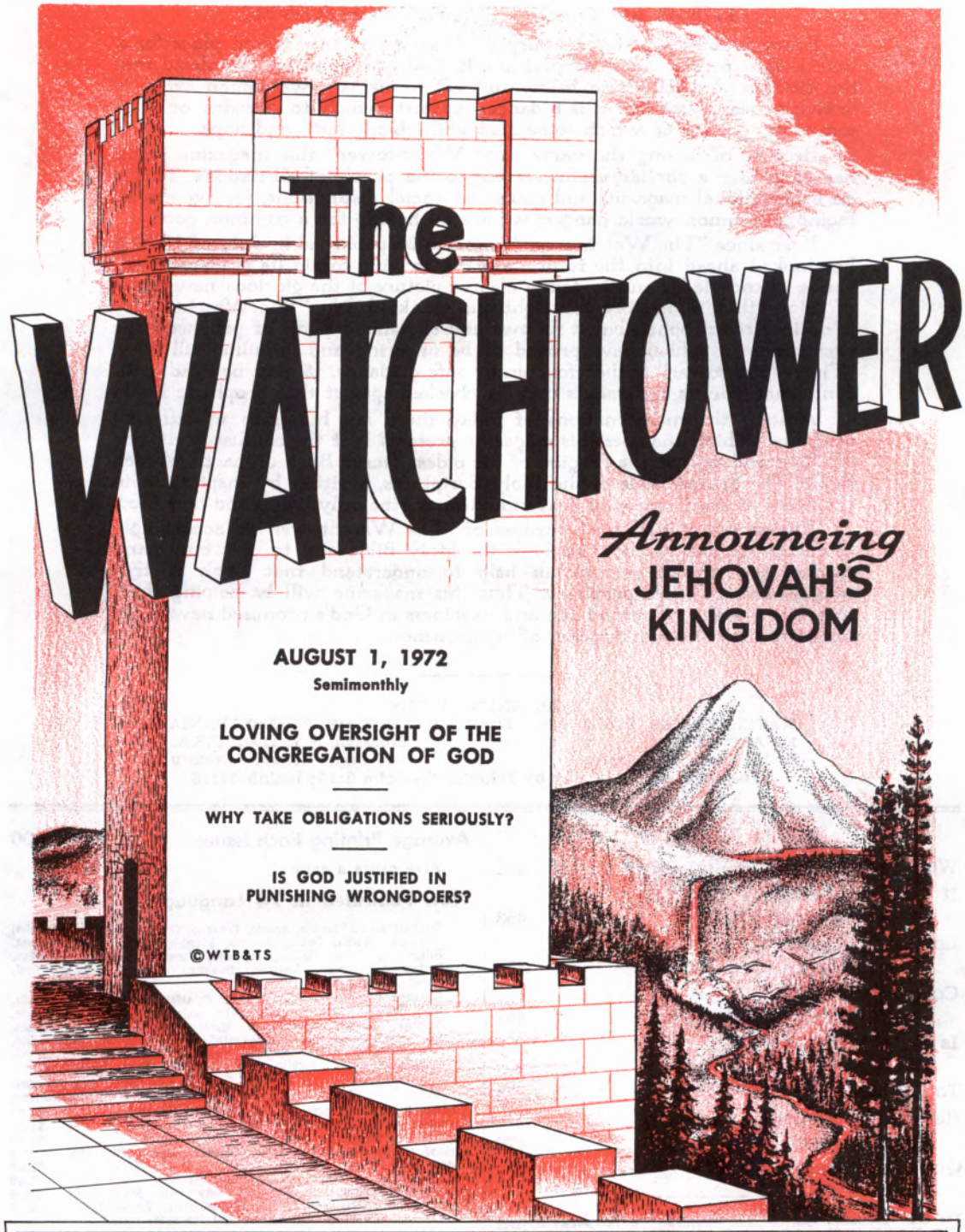

"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

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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The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
Vol. XCIII August 1, 1972 Number 15

Why Take OBLIGATIONS Seriously?

AMONG the obligations that many people today fail to take seriously is that of paying taxes. Failure to meet one's tax obligations is known as "tax evasion." According to a former tax official, "tax-evasion is becoming socially acceptable. Lots of people think it's a fun crime."

Apparently ever so many people today are trying to prove Benjamin Franklin wrong when he said: "In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes." Among the more glaring examples of such was a former vice-president of one of America's leading steel corporations. For twenty-three years he did not even file a tax return; a neglect that cost him $70,000 in back taxes, penalties and fines. Even more notorious was none other than the former head United States Commissioner of Internal Revenue, the nation's chief tax collector. He failed to report $160,000 of his income, for which he was fined $15,000 and given a five-year prison term.

There is laxity in assuming one's obligations in every sphere of human relations —taxes are but one area. Thus a popular American 'home and garden' magazine complained that today nobody cares, nobody takes obligations seriously: "We look to our own ease and profit. . . . Services are deteriorating. It's hard to find a repairman who will do a good job the first time. . . . Expensive new products lose knobs and buttons like cheap toys. Waiters act as if they're doing you a favor to serve you. Sales people gossip while you wait. Doctors' offices schedule appointments . . . as if your time is worth nothing. . . . Airlines misdirect thousands of bags."

Among other examples that might be cited is failure of marriage partners to take their obligations seriously. Even more widespread, people in general grossly neglect their obligations toward their Creator, Jehovah God.—Job 35:10, 11.

There are various reasons why so many fail to take their obligations seriously. For instance, when it comes to God, the obvious answer is, because of a lack of faith. The attitude of ever so many is that God is dead, or God does not see or care, or God is not going to do anything about it. —Ezek. 8:12; 2 Thess. 3:2.

When it comes to other obligations, many attempt to rationalize. Thus many

rationalize their failure to pay taxes on the basis that the income-tax laws often favor the rich, or because tax money is paid to rich farmers for not growing crops. When having a hard time to make ends meet, a father may feel that cheating on taxes is the lesser of two evils. Then again, a philandering husband may rationalize his cheating on obligations to his wife on the basis that she is lazy or does not appreciate him.

Why should we take our obligations toward God and our fellowman seriously? First of all, because God exists. The very universe is proof of his existence. He sees all; "there is not a creation that is not manifest to his sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting." And as his Word warns: "The sins of some men are publicly manifest, leading directly to judgment, but as for other men their sins also become manifest later."—Heb. 4:13; 1 Tim. 5:24.

We should take our obligations seriously because it is the right, just and fair, the honest thing to do. We cannot escape the implications of the Golden Rule, that we should treat others as we would want them to treat us. To have clear consciences, to have self-respect, we must put forth sincere efforts to live by what we know is right. There is satisfaction, there is a feeling of strength when we have overcome the temptation to cheat the government, or our mates or our neighbor. The one living up to his obligations is as bold as a lion, but the one who fails to do so is like the sneaking hyena.—Prov. 28:1.

And further, there is always the likelihood of one's being found out. In that case there may be fines and even imprisonment to endure, not to say anything of shameful exposure. The very fear of such consequences should serve as a deterrent.

Parents in particular have a responsibility along this line, both to inculcate in their offspring the need of taking obligations seriously and to practice the same themselves. Even before school age, children can be taught to accept the responsibility of taking care of their personal needs and to make a habit of being orderly, as in the putting away of their toys.

As they grow older they can be taught to do things for others, help their younger brothers and sisters, help mother with her housework or help father with the chores he has to do around the home. They should be taught to be dependable, to follow through with what they promise or agree to do. They should also be taught to accept the obligation of being accountable for their actions. They should be taught to accept the consequences of their own shortcomings and not to try to invent excuses or blame others. All such discipline will help them to take their obligations seriously once they are on their own.

Without a doubt, the most concerned of all about taking their obligations seriously should be dedicated Christian ministers. Having obligated themselves to do God's will, they are especially accountable to Him. They have the obligation of paying back Caesar's things to Caesar but God's things to God. (Mark 12:17) Included in paying back Caesar's things is the paying of taxes. Paying back God's things to God includes taking seriously their commission to witness to God's name and kingdom. (Isa. 43:10-12; Matt. 24:14) It also includes taking seriously their obligation to lead upright, clean, Christian lives. And it includes taking seriously their obligation to assemble with fellow Christians for the purpose of mutual encouragement. —Gal. 5:22, 23; Heb. 10:24, 25.

Why take obligations seriously? In short, because God requires it. Because it is the right thing, the wise thing, yes, the most rewarding thing to do.

If You Want to Serve God,

CLEAN UP YOUR LIFE!

SHE is a wholesome-looking model, nineteen years of age. Her picture had appeared on the cover of a men's magazine, and now its publishers wanted to have a nude picture of her appear in the magazine's two-page center spread. But then something happened.

This young woman had begun studying the Bible with one of Jehovah's witnesses. Because of this, as *Time* magazine (February 28, 1972) tells, "the pretty model had second thoughts about the probity of Playmatehood and begged the magazine to scrap the April centerfold. 'Everyone laughed,' said Debbie. 'They thought I was kidding. The next morning I got up and prayed like mad.' Then she called . . . again. This time the message got through."

That cancellation cost the model five thousand dollars, but it was worth it, for now she was beginning to be concerned with pleasing God. How could her nude picture possibly fit in with the "well-arranged dress" and the "modesty and soundness of mind" that the Bible says should characterize Christian women? —1 Tim. 2:9.

Such changes in one's life are not what Christendom's religious leaders, by and large, require of their churchgoers. Such vices as gambling, drunkenness, dishonest business practices and sexual immorality are winked at. As parents become ever more permissive, so do Christendom's clergy. The press keeps telling of more and more clergymen, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, not only condoning premarital sex and finding excuses for adultery, but even marrying homosexuals, and allowing them to remain church members in good standing.—Rom. 1:24-32.

But if you really want to serve the true God Jehovah, you have no such options, for he says: "You must be holy, because I am holy." (1 Pet. 1:16) Yes, if you want to serve Jehovah God you cannot go along with the world, no matter how many clergymen may wink at this bad conduct, or even approve of it. That is why the apostle Paul wrote to Christians: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Surely the course of a Christian runs counter to the world, and so a Christian must work at being different from the world.—Rom. 12:2.

The contrast between worldlings and true Christians is also highlighted by the inspired words of the apostle Peter: "For the time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches . . . Because you do not continue running with them in this course to the same low sink of debauchery, they are puzzled and go on speaking abusively of you."—1 Pet. 4:3, 4.

GOD'S REQUIREMENTS MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

Far from condoning such worldly practices, the Scriptures require Christians to take God's requirements seriously: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people. Let no man deceive you with empty words, for because of the aforesaid things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partakers with them. Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord; and quit sharing with them in the unfruitful works that belong to the darkness, but, rather, even be reproving them." —Eph. 5:3, 6, 7, 10, 11.

Christians who would serve God are warned against the works of the fallen flesh: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, and they are fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, . . . strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, . . . drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these. As to these things I am forewarning you, the same as I did forewarn you, that those who practice such things will not inherit God's kingdom." Paul took these matters seriously. He had previously warned them about these things and now he does it again by letter.—Gal. 5:19-21.

The Hebrew Christians in Judea received a similar warning from the inspired apostle: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Heb. 13:4) To be able to serve God, your marital status must be in line with the Bible. You cannot live with someone to whom you are not Scripturally married. The Christian congregation at Corinth had failed to take God's righteous requirements seriously, for it tolerated among them a man living with his father's wife. The apostle Paul was very much incensed at this situation and so, after severely reproving them, commanded: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."—1 Cor. 5:1-13.

That the early Christians took God's righteous requirements seriously can also be seen by the way Ananias and Sapphira were dealt with for their hypocritical lying. For their deception God's holy spirit struck them dead. "Consequently great fear came over the whole congregation and over all those hearing about these things." Yes, Jehovah God was not going to tolerate any lying hypocrites in his newly formed Christian congregation. —Acts 5:1-11.

MODERN EXAMPLES

In this Jehovah God does not require more than his earthly imperfect servants can do. Those who clean up their lives receive corresponding blessings. Thus at the 1970 Anaheim, California, assembly of Jehovah's witnesses, among those baptized was a onetime professional thief whose chief concern had been to keep out of the clutches of the police. When he began studying the Bible with the Witnesses, he said, "my comrades laughed and said God would never forgive me for all the wrongs I had done. But Jehovah did." Now he is a changed man and his chief concern is to preach the good news of God's kingdom.—Matt. 24:14.

Then there was the Brooklyn housewife whose home was a haven for drunks, she herself being one. Drunkenness was her escape, as her two grown sons were thieving drug addicts. Upon studying with the Witnesses she cleaned up her life as well as her home. She no longer got drunk and she insisted that one of her sons, who had no desire to drop the drug habit, move out of her home. The other son, who re-

turned from a hospital cured, she allowed to remain. And now he also has begun studying the Bible with one of the Witnesses.

A woman in Pennsylvania furnished another example. After her husband died she lived for nine years in fornication with a man who had left his wife without divorcing her. Upon studying the Bible with the Witnesses, they too wanted to serve Jehovah and so cleaned up their lives.

Featured in the *Times Democrat,* Davenport, Iowa (May 29, 1971), was a family in which the husband dreaded to come home because his wife was such a "Nag," as she herself later put it. Their two sons lived like hippies and thought nothing of using drugs. They stayed away from home for long periods of time because of the way their parents kept yelling at each other. Now, as a result of studying the Bible with Jehovah's witnesses, all this has been changed and they are a united happy family. Said one of the sons: "When our dad started living by the Bible, we could respect him, and being obedient wasn't so hard."

AIDS TO CLEANING UP

Among the aids God has provided to help one to clean up one's life is the Bible. By reading it daily and regularly studying it with the help of Bible study aids you will be strengthened in your resolve and in your efforts to clean up your life. The Scriptures are indeed "beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness." —2 Tim. 3:16.

Another great help is prayer, even as noted in the account of the girl model. The Bible tells us to "pray incessantly," and in particular to ask God for his holy spirit, which God is more willing to give than earthly parents are to give good things to their children.—1 Thess. 5:17; Luke 11:13.

Important also is regular association with those who have cleaned up their lives, as well as to avoid bad associations, which "spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:33) Good associates are always to be found at the congregational meetings of Jehovah's witnesses. So attending those meetings is sure to help you.—Heb. 10:23-25.

CLEANING UP IS URGENT

This matter of cleaning up is not to be put off until tomorrow. It may well be that tomorrow's temptations or pressures will weaken your desire to clean up. Tomorrow may be too late. How so? Because we are living in the "last days" of this wicked system of things. Jesus indicated how urgent this matter was by an illustration: "When you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation . . . begin fleeing to the mountains. Let the man on the housetop not come down to take the goods out of his house; and let the man in the field not return to the house to pick up his outer garment." No question about it, flight from this doomed wicked system of things is urgent and the longer the delay the more difficult it will get, because "that day and hour" is getting closer and closer. No time is to be lost!—Matt. 24:15-18, 34-36.

Pertinent here are also the words of the psalmist: "Today if you people listen to his own voice, do not harden your heart." For you to put off cleaning up your life until some future time would be to harden your heart!—Ps. 95:7, 8.

So, if you have been following the course of this wicked world and you want to serve God, you know what you must do. Clean up your life, and do it at once!

Loving Oversight OF THE CONGREGATION OF GOD

AS A reader of this magazine, you no doubt know something about the modern-day organization of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. You may even be intimately acquainted with the organization and its various functions. Perhaps you are serving in some responsible position in it or under its direction. On the other hand, your knowledge of the organization may be limited, yet you enjoy reading this magazine. Hopefully, you read it regularly because you recognize that the message that it holds forth is concerning something in which you can put your confidence, namely, God's kingdom. However, some questions may come to mind as you read this publication, possibly ones similar to these: How do Jehovah's witnesses get their worldwide preaching and publishing done? What sort of men are used to direct the work? What kind of training is received by those given responsible positions of oversight in connection with the work of Jehovah's witnesses?

[2] Oversight—a familiar term to most of us, granted, but what does it mean? A mother observes her child at play; a teacher listens carefully to the responses his charges make to his questions; the conductor of an orchestra, with spirit and enthusiasm, directs a large group in rendering a well-known symphony. All of these situations have one element in common: oversight or supervision, the oversight provided by a parent, a teacher, a conductor. Oversight is exercised toward us at all stages of life, from the cradle onward. Oversight is a part of living. Really, one can escape most human oversight only by becoming a complete recluse, and that is not a desirable alternative.

"Let the older men who preside in a fine way be reckoned worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching."—1 Tim. 5:17.

[3] Oversight, if exercised properly, holds many benefits for us. For example, through the loving and Scriptural exercise of parental oversight, we become people who are strong and mature, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. Through the wise oversight of an instructor, a teacher, we become knowledgeable, thinking persons. In an orchestra the collective talents of a group of artistic people are properly coordinated through wise oversight, and the result is a pleasure—a pleasure to those who are individually making a contribution to the listening pleasure of others.

[4] Oversight that is loving, properly con-

1. What questions regarding the organization of Jehovah's Christian witnesses likely have come to mind as some persons read *The Watchtower*?
2. Give some illustrations of oversight and how all-embracing it is.
3, 4. (a) Identify some of the benefits of oversight. (b) What kind of oversight is most effective and appreciated?

trolled, and faithfully administered takes into consideration the feelings of those in one's charge. This in turn can make submission, cooperation, and acceptance of oversight a real pleasure. If the oversight is loving and faithful, much can be accomplished.

[5] It is appreciated that parents have quite a role to play in providing a climate of mutual respect and happiness in their families. When such oversight is not provided, problems result. In an article entitled "Unloving Parents Blamed for a Protest Generation," the Detroit *Free Press* of Saturday, May 16, 1970, stated the following: " 'Parents who find it harder to give their children love than money, who raise them from a distance and even punish them that way, have helped to create a generation of campus protesters,' a Harvard University psychiatrist said Friday. Dr. A. M. Nicholi said, 'The time demands on the highly successful father—or even on many less successful fathers holding two jobs—result in homes virtually without paternal figures. In addition, the hours the mother spends at home and the quality of the relationship between mother and child continues to decline.' "

[6] Would you say there are problems to be overcome in the field of human relations? Obviously so. Where can we go, then, to gain some practical points regarding loving oversight and willing obedience, so we can be useful, happy people, a credit to our community and to our God? We are benefited greatly along these lines when we examine the structure and operation of the Christian congregation today, because of its integrity to the first-century model described for us in the Scriptures. —Acts 15:2, 22, 23; 16:4, 5.

5. Describe what happens where parental oversight is lacking.
6. Where can we go to gain practical, helpful points regarding loving oversight? Why is this so?

THE "CONGREGATION"—WHAT IS IT?

[7] Now, when we say "the Christian congregation," what do we mean? From a Scriptural and doctrinal viewpoint, the Christian congregation specifically is made up of 144,000 disciples who are spoken of as the "body" of Christ, of which Christ Jesus is the Head. These disciples have been chosen by God to form with the Messiah Jesus a heavenly organization comprising God's Messianic kingdom. (Col. 1:18, 24; 2 Thess. 2:13) Soon Jesus Christ and this "congregation," glorified in heaven, will administer marvelous benefits to all mankind. These benefits will flow through a new system of things in which love, happiness and peace will prevail, not hate, violence and gloom. That time indeed will be a time of rejoicing, when even the dead will be resurrected and the whole earth will be made a paradise under God's heavenly Kingdom government, which will provide loving oversight for all of mankind.—Dan. 7:14, 18; John 5:28, 29; Rev. 21:1-5.

[8] But for the sake of our discussion here, the term "congregation" is used with reference to local assemblies of Christian people scattered throughout the earth wherever people gather together regularly to learn of Jehovah's will for them. Scriptural precedent for calling such local assemblies "congregations" is clearly set forth at Acts 8:1, 1 Corinthians 11:16 and Romans 16:3, 4. And, according to the *1972 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses,* there are 27,154 such congregations in 207 countries around the world.

[9] Of what is the Christian congregation today an expression? Clearly it is an ex-

7. (a) What is meant by "the Christian congregation"? (b) What benefits will Jesus Christ and this "congregation" soon administer? How?
8. (a) Explain how the term "congregation" is used in this discussion. (b) Do we have Scriptural precedent for this usage? Explain.
9. (a) What was foretold regarding the Christian congregation and its growth? (b) Do we see evidence of this today? Explain.

pression of God's love and wisdom. No one knows and cares for our best interests better than He does. (Ps. 145:14-16) He knew and foretold that true worship would attract thousands of honest-hearted individuals and that they would need to be taught, educated, and assisted to the point where they would be able to make more disciples like themselves. (Isa. 54:13; 60:22; Matt. 28:19, 20) As a matter of fact, 434,906 newly baptized ministers of Jehovah's Christian witnesses have been added to the growing ranks of these dedicated Christians in just the past three years.

THEOCRATIC APPOINTMENT IN THE CONGREGATION

[10] But who is at the head of this rapidly expanding congregation, you ask? Is it some brilliant, farsighted man, some human who is a master organizer? No, for the Christian congregation is operated theocratically, meaning that it recognizes the leadership only of Jehovah God as exercised through his Son and enthroned King, Jesus Christ. (Isa. 33:22; Heb. 12:2; Rev. 19:16) This is what makes the congregation theocratic in structure, adhering to God-rule. If an organization is to be fully theocratic, it must be directed and controlled altogether by God and by the forces he operates. It is vital, therefore, that each one recognize that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Christian congregation, as well as showing proper regard for those on earth who have been theocratically appointed to positions of oversight.—Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Cor. 11:3; Acts 14:23.

[11] Some individuals in Jehovah's Christian congregation have heavy responsibilities of oversight. (Luke 12:48) For example, some members of the governing body are also members of the board of directors of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Moreover, the governing body is made up of members of the "faithful and discreet slave" class mentioned at Matthew 24:45-47, and it represents that class. As a governing body it appoints elders and ministerial servants who hold responsible positions in the Christian congregation. They in turn perform valuable service in their respective assignments, all to Jehovah's glory. Since each person appointed by the governing body serves in some responsible position of oversight, each appointee must meet certain qualifications as outlined by Jehovah God in his Word the Bible. Each appointee can therefore be said to be appointed by God's holy spirit, not by any man. This further stamps the congregation as theocratic.—Matt. 23:8-12; Acts 13:2-5; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

[12] The ones primarily responsible for advancing the work in the local territory are these special appointees in the congregation. They are appointed by holy spirit to shepherd God's flock and to set the right example. (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 5:2) From all outward appearances these are ordinary men, for the most part, who are appointed as elders or overseers. They are "older men," as identified at 1 Timothy 5:17. They serve together as a "body of elders." (1 Tim. 4:14, ftn.) You will not recognize these men by any unusual garb, or by any special ecclesiastical titles. You might even work alongside one of these men in your employment in a bank, a grocery store, or on a construction site. However, though

10. (a) Please identify the leadership of the Christian congregation. (b) What is it that makes the congregation theocratic in structure?

11. (a) Explain the relationship of the governing body with the "faithful and discreet slave" class. (b) How can it be said that each one appointed to oversight has been appointed by holy spirit?

12. Describe those responsible for advancing the work in the local congregations.

they may engage in regular secular work, necessary for taking care of their family responsibilities, they are primarily ministers of God and appointed overseers in the congregation.

[13] Is the matter of qualifying as an overseer one of seniority? No, the standard is one that is spiritual. The Scriptural qualifications for overseers are set out at 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Each overseer appointed by the governing body of the "faithful and discreet slave" must meet these qualifications. What, then, are their primary duties? Their duties are to 'shepherd the flock of God,' to see that all in the congregation are aided to fulfill their obligations of dedication in a manner acceptable to Jehovah God, and that all living in the territory assigned to the congregation are given opportunity to receive a regular and thorough witness to the Kingdom. To equip these men better to do this, and in order that they might be able to teach more effectively, which is one of their main responsibilities, special training is provided at the Watch Tower Society's Kingdom Ministry School, operated for this purpose usually at the branch office of the Society.

Overseers show loving concern for their Christian brothers, aiding them in the congregation . . .

13. (a) How does one qualify to be an overseer? (b) What are the primary duties of overseers? (c) Do they receive any special training for their work?

FIVE PRINCIPAL POSITIONS OF OVERSIGHT

[14] Each congregation has a presiding overseer. What is it that makes the presiding overseer successful in his work? It is his copying Jesus in showing love to the "sheep" and hospitality to strangers who associate with the congregation. (Matt. 11:28-30) Under the gaze of Christ the King, each presiding overseer must prove to be in a spiritual sense like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land.—Isa. 32:1, 2.

[15] Notice, please, what one traveling circuit overseer of Jehovah's witnesses had to say about a faithful presiding overseer in his circuit: "Brother A. was like a father, but a father who did not pamper his children, one who taught them with firmness, helping them to do what is right . . . He was no sentimentalist, but he showed great affection for his children along with encouragement and admonition." Obviously, men of this sort are 'dear to us.' (Phil. 2:29) These men help all in the congregation to grow to spiritual maturity and to cultivate heart appreciation for the truth.

. . . and also in preaching the good news

14. What actually makes any presiding overseer successful in his work?
15. (a) What was said about one presiding overseer? (b) Why are men of this sort 'dear to us'?

Their diversified talents and capabilities, their zeal for the ministry and their serving on behalf of the congregation under the headship of Christ truly stamp them as "gifts in men."—Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:8.

[16] In order to provide the needed loving oversight, there are associated with the presiding overseer a number of other elders. The duties of one of these, the field overseer, for instance, are many, but primarily he is to coordinate the Kingdom-preaching work of all the individual groups of ministers in the congregation so that a thorough witness is given in the territory. The field overseer also keeps accurate records of the congregation's field ministry. Then, once a month, the congregation's combined preaching report is tabulated and sent to the Society's branch office. Eventually all the branch reports go to the headquarters of the Society in Brooklyn, New York, and these are then compiled and published in the *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. This annual report also contains interesting experiences from the worldwide congregation of Kingdom preachers.

[17] Another of the "older men" or elders in the congregation is the Bible study overseer. He is interested in encouraging and promoting pure worship in the territory primarily by and through return visits on interested ones and arranging for free home Bible studies. Jehovah's witnesses gladly make return visits on interested persons and conduct such home Bible studies. (Gal. 6:6) The Bible study overseer provides needed oversight in this field of Bible education by helping various ones in the congregation to start new studies and to conduct them in a beneficial manner. And when newly interested ones begin to attend the meetings of the congregation, he gives particular attention to them to aid in their spiritual growth. Through his loving oversight and good teaching ability, more people in the territory assigned to the congregation receive an accurate knowledge of Jehovah's Word and purpose, this being essential to their salvation.—Acts 4:12.

[18] Each week the principal Bible study aid published by Jehovah's witnesses, the *Watchtower* magazine, is studied by the congregation as a whole. This is done in the form of a question-and-answer discussion. For this meeting the entire congregation usually meets in one place. Through the columns of *The Watchtower* comes increased light on God's Word as Jehovah makes it known. Because of the vital nature of these discussions, the *Watchtower* study is the most important meeting for all of Jehovah's Christian witnesses and interested persons. Therefore, the *Watchtower* study conductor, who presides over this meeting, has an important responsibility. This study enables all to be united in the same line of thought.—1 Cor. 1:10.

[19] Another ordained minister who provides loving oversight through a direct teaching of others in the congregation is the Theocratic Ministry School overseer. He presides over the Theocratic Ministry School, which meeting is held at the Kingdom Hall one evening each week. This is a perpetual training school for men, women and children. Students give short Bible talks to the group on assigned subjects. Several textbooks and specially designed speech counsel slips are used, and the school overseer, who is a qualified counselor, offers helpful suggestions for improvement as well as aiding the congregation to get full benefit from the fine material being discussed. In the course of

16. How does the field overseer fulfill his role as one of the "older men" in the congregation?
17. How vital is the work of the Bible study overseer?
18. Why is the *Watchtower* study the foremost congregation meeting for Jehovah's witnesses each week?
19. What does the Theocratic Ministry School overseer do for the benefit of the congregation? Explain the benefits of this school.

this training the Bible is read through in its entirety, and a wide range of Bible doctrines and topics are covered. All who truly desire to serve Jehovah are invited to enroll in this school. Have you done so?

OTHER AREAS OF OVERSIGHT

[20] The congregation book study conductor has a marvelous privilege in connection with teaching in the congregation. Because he works closely with a small group of fellow ministers in building up their faith and helping them to perfect the "art of teaching" so they in turn might aid others, he himself should be a fine teacher. (1 Tim. 4:15, 16; Titus 2: 6, 7) To this end, early in the week, usually, Jehovah's witnesses and persons who are studying the Bible with them go to the Kingdom Hall or the nearest home so designated by the congregation for a one-hour group study under the direction of a congregation book study conductor, using the Bible and a textbook provided by the Watch Tower Society. Here you can get acquainted with your nearest neighbors who are also interested in serving Jehovah and living in his righteous new order. (2 Pet. 3:13) The smaller size of the group enables and encourages you to speak up freely and get accustomed to declaring your faith before others. At the same time, your knowledge is sharpened by the comments of the others present. —Prov. 27:17.

[21] Likely you have noted that Jehovah's witnesses use printed Bible sermons when they teach. No doubt, too, you have observed that the Witnesses feature this very magazine, *The Watchtower,* and its companion, *Awake!,* in their public ministry from house to house. These publications are made available to them through their congregations. Of course, whether Christian ministers are offering to the public magazines or books, confusion would result if homes were called on in a "hit-or-miss" fashion. To prevent this, each congregation is assigned a certain territory by the Watch Tower Society. (Gal. 2:9) By arranging for the assigning of small portions of that territory to individual ministers, the field overseer ensures an orderly coverage of all the homes within the congregation's boundaries.—1 Cor. 14: 33.

[22] While salaries are not paid the overseers and the ministerial servants appointed to special duties in the congregation, maintaining a Kingdom Hall, and so forth, involves expenses, all of which are met by voluntary contributions. There are no collection plates in the congregations of Jehovah's Christian witnesses, no envelopes, no tithes or lists of contributors. (Matt. 6:1-4) Each one is free to contribute as he wishes to do so.—2 Cor. 9:7.

[23] The principle of loving oversight is evident, not only on a local basis, but also in the administration of the worldwide organization of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. This administration is carried on from international headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, operating through 93 branches of the Watch Tower Society world wide at the present time. These branches are visited each year by the president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society or by specially appointed representatives known as zone overseers. Similarly, congregations are visited about two times a year by elders, traveling ministers known as circuit overseers, who are

20. (a) Explain how the congregation book study conductor has a fine privilege in the congregation. (b) Why is it vital that he be a fine teacher? (c) What benefits flow to newly interested ones as well as Kingdom ministers through the congregation book study arrangement?

21. How are literature and territory in which to preach provided for Jehovah's witnesses?

22. How do Jehovah's witnesses take care of necessary expenses in the congregation?

23. Explain how loving oversight is administered through the entire Christian congregation world wide.

each responsible to provide loving assistance to approximately twenty-two congregations. All the congregations in each circuit meet in assembly twice a year, at which time they are visited and encouraged by another experienced minister, known as the district overseer. He usually serves twenty to twenty-two circuits. Circuit and district overseers report their activity directly to the branch office. Surely this principle of loving assistance and oversight has contributed much to the growth of Jehovah's Christian witnesses in recent years.

[24] What does all of this point up? It highlights the fact that Jehovah has a marvelous purpose in making the truth available to everyone today in an orderly fashion, and all of this is being done under the direction of Jesus Christ as Chief Shepherd and Overseer, under whom appointed men on earth serve in carrying out God's will. (Eph. 1:9, 10; 1 Pet. 5:4) Further, with the end of this old system of things so close at hand, soon there will be no one else present to administer earth's affairs except these ones specially appointed by the King, Jesus Christ. (Ps. 37:37, 38; 45:16) Surely, then, there are compelling reasons to learn to cooperate with such men today, and that is the subject of our next article, to which we invite your careful consideration.

24. (a) To what end does all of this loving oversight lead, and under whose direction? (b) What compelling reasons are there for cooperating with God's appointed ones?

Cooperating Fully WITH GOD'S APPOINTED ONES

"Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you."—Heb. 13:17.

ARE you a person who loves righteousness and justice? If so, does not your heart yearn to see hatred and violence pass away, peace prevail and happiness replace gloom? All of this and more is possible through God's kingdom, by which the affairs of this earth will be fully directed. (Isa. 11:3-5; Matt. 6:9, 10; Rev. 21:1-4) Is that not what you personally want to see, a completely new system replacing this old, dying system where selfishness and sin predominate? Can you picture in your mind anyone but Almighty God performing the mighty task of building a completely new system on the ashes of the old, and that within our generation? —Dan. 2:44; Prov. 29:2.

[2] It is not our purpose to discuss chronology here, yet feel free to ask any of Jehovah's witnesses to show you from the Scriptures the evidence that we are just a few short years away from the completion of six thousand years of man's existence on earth, and ask them what they think this means in terms of real freedom and liberation from God's viewpoint. They

1. What do all lovers of righteousness yearn to see? How is this possible?

2. How do we know the new system is very near? Where can we go for details?

will be happy to share this information with you.*

"NEW SYSTEM" WILL REQUIRE COOPERATION

3 Let your mind dwell for a moment, please, on some of the monumental tasks that will need to be accomplished in that new, divine system of things. For one thing, a vast educational program will be required to teach a new language to the millions of resurrected dead as they come forth from the graves. (John 5:28, 29) And, further, think of the work required in order to transform the hearts and minds of these people, many of whom have never heard of the Bible, or of God's laws and purposes for mankind. Then, think of the program that will be inaugurated in order to transform this earth of ours into the lovely garden that God has purposed. When one thinks of how long it takes to clear just one acre of ground, cultivate the soil and plant it so that it will bring forth shrubs and trees and other plants in a manner that makes that area worthy of being called a garden park, one gets some idea of the colossal undertaking to transform the whole earth into a global paradise with sufficient food-producing areas to sustain a comfortable population on the earth.—Gen. 1:28; Ps. 72:16; 67:6; Ezek. 34:27.

4 And, just think, all of this must be done in a period of one thousand years so that the prophecy will be fulfilled: "Next, the end, when he hands over the kingdom to his God and Father, when he has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power [in opposition to God]. For he must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. As the last enemy, death is to be brought to nothing. For God 'subjected all things under his feet.' But when he says that 'all things have been subjected,' it is evident that it is with the exception of the one who subjected all things to him. But when all things will have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone." (1 Cor. 15:24-28) Obviously, for this prophecy to be fulfilled, the whole earth will have to be transformed into a global paradise, even as was purposed in the beginning, and that within a period of one thousand years.—Rev. 20:2-6.

5 Think, too, of the pleasure and satisfaction it will give Jesus Christ as the director and coordinator of all these works to say to his heavenly Father, in effect: 'Here it is, Father. The assignment you gave me has been completed. The earth has been made a paradise like Eden. The dead in Sheol have all been resurrected, trained and disciplined. Mankind has been brought to perfection. All the things you have asked me to do have now been accomplished, and all on time!'

6 Now, what does this brief foreglimpse teach us? Among other things, it emphasizes that the vast work ahead of us that needs to be accomplished will require organization, unity, skilled workers, willing hearts, fine administrators and, above all, Jehovah's spirit and blessing to get it done on time. Is this not one of the reasons why God is providing loving oversight for us today, namely, that such oversight can prepare us for working and producing in the new system of the future that is so near?—John 15:5, 8; Col. 2:19.

* For details see chapter one, "Why Human Creation Will Yet Be Set Free," in the book *Life Everlasting —in Freedom of the Sons of God.*

3. Describe some of the monumental tasks that will need to be performed in the new system.

4, 5. (a) For 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 to be fulfilled, what must Christ's kingly rule successfully accomplish? (b) Describe the satisfaction that the King will surely have at that time.

6. What conclusions may we draw from this brief glimpse of the future?

BE OBEDIENT TO THOSE TAKING THE LEAD

[7] Hence, what should be the attitude of all servants of God toward direction, oversight and discipline that come through the Christian congregation today? Let us learn not only what our attitude should be, but what rewards will accrue from having the right viewpoint toward direction and discipline now and in the future.—Heb. 12:5-11.

[8] For one thing, we want to remember that we are human, and all humans make mistakes. (Ps. 51:5) Yet, dedicated Christians, especially overseers and ministerial servants, are trained to be kind, loving, helpful, and yet decisive. These qualities of loving-kindness, mercy and justice are identifying marks of mature Christians. (John 13:35; Mic. 6:8) Should not our hearts be moved to trust men like those? In fact, the apostle Paul urges us to be submissive to them, writing at Hebrews 13:17: "Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you." Now, as we reason on this scripture, we notice that these overseers must make an accounting for our souls, that is, our lives. When someone realizes that he is accountable to someone higher than he is, generally that one thinks before speaking or acting. He certainly does not want to act recklessly.

[9] Jehovah, from ancient times, has urged humans charged with the responsibility to judge, guide and direct, to think before acting. How well this principle is enunciated at 2 Chronicles 19:6, 7: "And he went on to say to the judges: 'See what you are doing, because it is not for man that you judge but it is for Jehovah; and he is with you in the matter of judgment. And now let the dread of Jehovah come to be upon you. Be careful and act, for with Jehovah our God there is no unrighteousness or partiality or taking of a bribe.'" Thus the carefulness, the weighing of the facts, the judging of all the evidence always precedes the acting, that is, the deciding, the rendering of the verdict.

[10] It is not easy to be an elder, a shepherd, an overseer, or a judge. Making wise decisions for the benefit of God's people requires discernment, knowledge, and understanding. (Prov. 2:3-5) And in many respects, because of the human element, not all persons are easy to deal with. Perhaps you are one who resists counsel, at least to some extent. Perhaps you have not been associated with Jehovah's organization very long. Or, you may be one who is studying with Jehovah's people, and you are somewhat apprehensive about discipline and adjustment you are asked to make in your life from the human standard to which you have been accustomed. Do not be afraid of the loving oversight exercised by Jehovah's organization. Not only is it preparing us for life in the new system of things; it is invaluable in aiding us now to get along with one another in our imperfect state today. (Ps. 141:5) When one thinks of the pressures that come upon us in this old system, where tempers flare, where some misuse their tongues to gossip, where self-control is a word little understood and less employed, we can appreciate how vital it is to have loving oversight and direct counsel from those who are spiritually older.

7. What question comes up as to our attitude toward oversight and discipline now and in the future?

8. (a) Although all human overseers make mistakes, why can we trust those appointed to be overseers in the Christian congregation? (b) How does Hebrews 13:17 provide us with food for thought and direction along these lines? (c) Explain "accountability" and its effects.

9. What does 2 Chronicles 19:6, 7 teach those who have the responsibility of judging and counseling?

10. (a) Is it easy to be an overseer? Explain. (b) Why should we not be apprehensive about the oversight provided in the Christian congregation? (c) How vital is it to have such loving oversight?

(Prov. 1:22, 30, 33) The skillful direction and loving help of elders result in a marvelous blend of diversified talents and personalities all combined to accomplish the most important work on earth today, namely, the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom before it is too late.—Matt. 24:14.

HOW TO RESTORE THOSE TAKING FALSE STEPS

[11] Remember, too, it is not easy to give counsel. One entrusted with responsibility, called upon to teach or counsel, must weigh what he says. (Jas. 3:1) The tongue can injure and hurt as well as heal. (Jas. 3:5-10) But overseers of God's people must not hold back when they see error. No doubt this is why Paul wrote: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted."—Gal. 6:1.

[12] Is this scripture directed to overseers or elders alone? No, for if anyone sees one of his fellow workers taking some false step before he is aware of it, it is his responsibility to try to restore such a person in a spirit of mildness. Really, it would be loving on our part to do so. If the sin is serious, we would properly tell the wrongdoer to report this to the responsible overseers in the congregation promptly, and that if he did not do so, we ourselves would be duty-bound out of loyal attachment to Jehovah's organization to bring the matter to the attention of the congregation's judicial committee. (1 Cor. 5:9-13; Ps. 31:23) One who loves righteousness and is truly loyal to God will courageously step forward and expose any grossly sinful conduct of which he is a witness within the congregation and he will freely testify to the truth of the matter when called upon to do so.—Lev. 5:1; Eph. 4:24; Luke 1:74, 75.

[13] Of course, when we consider the matter of getting along with one another and cooperating with those in positions of oversight, we are often reminded of the loving attitude all of us should have toward one another. In fact, love should cover a multitude of sins, and when one has a loving attitude toward his fellowman, he can forgive *and* forget. Love truly works wonders. (1 Pet. 4:8; 1 Cor. 13:4, 5) However, sometimes love moves dedicated Christians not to ignore a wrong but to endeavor to help the wrongdoer because the problem may be very serious. What, then, is the formula for settling serious differences between individuals?

'LAY BARE YOUR BROTHER'S SIN' —WHEN AND HOW?

[14] Jesus gave counsel concerning sins that might be committed against a person and that are considered as too serious in nature to be overlooked. He said: "If your brother commits a sin, go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector." (Matt. 18:15-17) Jesus' listeners, be-

11. (a) Why must those with responsibility as teachers use their tongues wisely? (b) Should an overseer hold back counsel when he sees error? Explain.
12. (a) Is Galatians 6:1 directed only to overseers? Explain. (b) If we become aware of a serious sin, how could we handle the situation? (c) What cooperation can be expected from those who are truly loyal to God when they observe sinful conduct within the Christian congregation?
13. Explain how love helps us in the Christian congregation.
14. (a) What steps did Jesus outline for handling cases of sin against a person, which cases are too serious to be overlooked? (b) What would it mean for one to be viewed "as a man of the nations and as a tax collector"?

ing Jewish, knew that for others of his people to look upon a Jew "as a man of the nations and as a tax collector" would mean his being viewed as cast out of the Jewish congregation.

15 Since the steps that Jesus set forth could lead to such a serious consequence, he was obviously not setting out a formula for the handling of every petty offense against an individual. Of course, many times it is the proper and wise and very helpful thing to go and talk to someone where personal difficulty exists because of some minor offense, doing this with the aim of healing any breach that seems to be developing. (Matt. 6:14, 15; Prov. 12:18) Many misunderstandings are cleared up in this way. But evidently this was not what Jesus was speaking of at this time. He referred, not to mere personal differences, but to offenses serious enough to merit one's expulsion from the congregation.

16 Before ever you would initiate the procedure set out at Matthew 18:15-17, then, you should have definite proof that such a serious sin was indeed committed against you. Jesus did not say, 'If you *think* your brother has sinned.' You should consider the counsel at Proverbs 25:8-10 so that you do not start something that will only bring shame and humiliation upon you yourself. Even where the proof exists, you should not spread the matter abroad, gossiping about it, but should go to the offender privately and "lay bare his fault between you and him alone."

17 If your brother "listens," accepting your reproof, then "you have gained your brother." Does this refer simply to effecting a personal reconciliation? No, but as the rest of Jesus' counsel shows, it must mean 'gaining him' in the sense of helping him to stay within the congregation, turning him back from a course that could lead to his being expelled therefrom, with accompanying loss of God's favor and blessing. So the 'gaining' of your brother would be in the sense described at James 5:19, 20, Galatians 6:1 and Jude 22, 23. This, in fact, should be your principal aim and desire—not that of getting personal relief or satisfaction for some offense.

18 Where the sinner accepts reproof and seeks forgiveness, Jesus states, there is no need to carry the matter farther. This fact shows that, although serious, the offenses here discussed were limited in nature to such as could be settled between the individuals involved. This would not include such offenses as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, blasphemy, apostasy, idolatry and similar grave sins, for under the Law covenant then in force, these sins required more than forgiveness from an offended individual.—1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:19-21.

19 In view of this, and in view of the illustration that Jesus subsequently gave, as recorded at Matthew 18:21-35, the sins here considered evidently were sins such as those involving financial or property matters—failing to make proper payment for something, some action involving a measure of fraud—or perhaps damaging one's reputation by actual slander, or similar sins. In these cases, if the offender recognized his wrong, expressed willingness to right it to the extent possible, and sought forgiveness, the matter could be settled by the offended one's granting forgiveness.—Compare Matthew 5:25, 26; Luke 12:58.

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15. How might a minor personal offense beneficially be handled, but was this the type of offense that Jesus was here discussing?
16. Before initiating the procedure outlined at Matthew 18:15-17, what caution is in order?
17. What is meant in this scripture by 'gaining' one's brother?
18. What offenses were not covered by the instructions here given by Jesus, and why not?
19. The sins here under consideration were of what nature, and what indicates this?

[20] But what if you take this initial step and the one sinning does not respond? Due to the seriousness of the offense, you cannot simply dismiss the matter. Jesus' counsel shows that you should seek out one or two others and return to talk to the offender. Reasonably these should be witnesses to the wrong. They do not go as mere neutral observers or mediators trying to effect a reconciliation or compromise solution. Instead, you take them with you so that because of having witnessed the wrong, they can then add their testimony to yours. They can also serve as hearers of what is then said. If the matter takes a further step and comes before "the congregation" and the offender denies or alters certain statements or admissions made, these others can give their testimony and bring out the facts. Hopefully this further step will not be necessary and the individual will respond to the combined efforts made to restore him to a course of righteousness. If so, then the matter is closed.

[21] If the offender still refuses to admit his guilt, then what? The matter should now be brought to the attention of the responsible members of the congregation, those of the body of elders assigned to serve in a judicial capacity. It is hoped that the individual will now listen to their official judgment and be "gained" as a person fit to remain in the congregation. If not, then he is disfellowshiped, thereafter to be treated as an outsider.—Matt. 18:17.

20. (a) If the wrongdoer does not respond favorably when you speak to him alone, what further step must be taken? (b) Who would be the "one or two" others that you would take along with you?
21. What further step may yet be necessary, with what possible outcomes?

COOPERATION IN OTHER MATTERS

[22] Cooperation with God's appointed ones takes many forms, all of which work for unity and harmony within the Christian congregation. At this point it might be good to mention some of the things individual ministers can do on their own initiative. It does not take much to see that each Christian has a responsibility toward someone who is ill, someone who needs encouragement, or perhaps someone who is in the hospital. Should we have to go to the presiding overseer to ask him if there is something we can do when such situations exist? If, for example, a Christian woman has been ill and has just recently come out of the hospital and is recuperating, is it not evident that quite likely she needs some sort of help? She may need hot meals brought to her. She may need someone to clean her home, or to read to her and encourage her, or to give her family physical or spiritual aid. How close this makes us feel toward one another, and how Christlike such actions on our part would be!—Jas. 1:27; 2:14-17.

[23] Then, too, think of keeping the Kingdom Hall clean and in good repair. Sometimes these responsibilities fall to a few in the congregation. Could you cooperate, helping out in this regard, perhaps even volunteering to do so? Or is there someone spiritually ill you could encourage or help? Is there someone who is missing meetings or who does not appear to have the same joy in the field

Helping to clean the Kingdom Hall is one of the many ways to cooperate with the appointed overseers

22. Name some of the kind things that individual ministers in a congregation can do on their own initiative. What will such actions do for the congregation?
23. Outline other services we could willingly perform, showing our love for those in the Christian congregation.

ministry he once had? Are only the elders to show an interest in such ones? Certainly not. Without prying into one's personal affairs, could you be of spiritual encouragement and help to such an individual? Sometimes just visiting such ones in their homes, without going there to find out what is wrong with them, is comforting, and in the process of the conversation often the problem is divulged, and then appropriate spiritual help can be given. How many things we can do if we are moved by love for all in the congregation!

24 Without a question of doubt, we live in extraordinary times. Dedicated Christians and those studying the Bible with them realize that the "great tribulation" is coming. (Matt. 24:21, 22) That time is very near. We see God's favor upon his congregation. Surely it should be the desire of every lover of righteousness to line up fully with the Christian congregation. But, it seems that some associated with the Christian congregation are not truly wholehearted in their service or as obedient to Jehovah as they could be. Many things distract such ones, and they appear to have "one foot in the old system," so to speak. What about such ones in just a few short years from now? Will they be there? Then there will be no old system of things at all, but God's kingdom will be in full control over the earth and its affairs. When we have dealings with people then, they will all be our brothers or people who are being taught to live in the new system of things. We will all be governed by Jehovah's law of love. (Jas. 2:8) With a view to life then, it is wise to get accustomed to the shepherding and loving oversight of Jehovah's appointed ones in the Christian congregation today. (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) This will most assuredly give us a grand head start in the new system of things, where there will be no elements of this old system of things remaining at all. Really, then, there are compelling reasons for each one of us to come under the loving oversight of the Christian congregation today, working together, transforming our hearts and minds, making whatever physical, emotional and spiritual adjustments are necessary to please Jehovah.—Rom. 12:1, 2.

THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Appreciating the Gift Called "Work."**
- **Do You Get Frustrated?**
- **Questions That Disturb You—What Should You Do?**

25 Truly, Jehovah's Christian congregation is a marvel. It is not perfect in the absolute or final sense, but it certainly is perfectly devoted to Jehovah and displays his qualities of loving-kindness, mercy and justice. The contaminated atmosphere of the old system of things is death-dealing. The pure atmosphere of the new system of things is life-giving. How happy it should make all of us, as well as all interested persons who love righteousness, to know that through the loving oversight provided by Jehovah, his King-Son Jesus Christ, and the "faithful and discreet slave" class, we are being instructed, corrected and protected as we walk along together and cooperate with one another, helping one another to gain entrance into the new system of things by Jehovah's undeserved kindness!

24. (a) What should be the desire of every lover of righteousness today? (b) What benefits are there from getting accustomed to the control and loving oversight of Jehovah's appointed ones today?

25. What makes Jehovah's people such a happy throng today?

IS GOD JUSTIFIED In Punishing Wrongdoers?

WE HAVE seen it happen in recent times that a nation goes bad and violates international law. In such case, other nations may combine to fight to subdue and punish the "outlaw" or aggressor nation. In the process cities are destroyed and civilian populations slaughtered. Such was the case when Hitler disturbed world peace.

Such action is generally accepted as necessary. The nonmilitary people fall under the same condemnation as the soldiers. The argument is made, 'Do they not back up their political leaders and the principles these stand for? Do they not support their armies by work they do on the home front?'

Similarly, within a nation, rulers take steps to subdue lawless, seditious elements. This they feel they must do to preserve order and the good name of their government, and so that the law-abiding citizens can enjoy peace and security. They feel that if the government does not act, it will decay, and defeat or anarchy will eventually result.

Is it not strange, then, that these same people who advance such arguments as to the rightness and wisdom of such action by governments will often complain and charge God with cruelty when they read that God will punish wrongdoers with destruction?

Nevertheless, as Universal Sovereign, God is bound to act against rebellious ones disobedient to his laws. This he must do, otherwise would he not show himself weak, not able or concerned enough to enforce his own laws and not worthy of being Sovereign? Moreover, he would not be exercising justice toward those who obey his laws. But what about a nation or an organization that, while claiming to serve him, brings reproach on his rulership by disobedience and corrupt practices? He is even more strongly obligated to act to clear his name and vindicate his sovereignty.

Those who profess to serve God but who are disobedient to him have not really come to know him. If they did, they would love him for his fine qualities and because of the goodness he has shown to mankind. They would have become real friends of God, intimates of his, because he would then "know" or acknowledge them. (Matt. 11:27; compare Matthew 7:20.) He would recognize them as a man would recognize a welcome guest in his house. (Ps. 24:3, 4; 27:4) Such ones actually *knowing* God would not take up a practice of wrongdoing.—1 John 3:6; 4:8.

THE CHIEF WRONGDOERS AGAINST GOD

The apostle Paul writes that God, through Jesus Christ, will bring "the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction" upon "those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thess. 1:8, 9) Paul then describes a class or group of men called, in a composite sense, "the man of lawlessness."—2 Thess. 2:3.

The apostle shows that this compos-

ite "man of lawlessness" would be one who would make great religious professions. He would lift himself up above others and would dictate religiously to men. But he would actually be teaching lies. The end of such a class of men would be destruction, at the time of the manifestation of Christ's presence.—2 Thess. 2:4-12.

GOD PUNISHED HIS PROFESSED PEOPLE ISRAEL

The group described is found today among the clergy of Christendom. The Sovereign God has a valid purpose in executing his judicial decisions against Christendom's religious system led by this "man of lawlessness." This can be gathered from what he said to his prophet Ezekiel about the inhabitants of ancient Jerusalem and Judah, because Christendom is a fitting counterpart of Jerusalem, which acted in a most rebellious, corrupt way. Jehovah warned:

> "Make the chain, for the land itself has become full of bloodstained judgment and the city itself has become full of violence." —Ezek. 7:23.

When Jerusalem was destroyed in 607 B.C.E. the survivors were literally put in chains. Jehovah wanted Ezekiel to warn the Israelites of the coming judgment, so that when the time arrived, just six years later, they would know that the punishment they were receiving was really from Jehovah. They would know that there is a God who intervenes in the affairs of men and that his name is Jehovah.

After the destruction, the prophet Jeremiah spoke for the survivors of the siege, saying: "He has blocked me up as with a stone wall, that I may not go forth. He has made my copper fetters heavy." (Lam. 3:7) King Zedekiah, fleeing from the city, was captured and bound: "And the eyes of Zedekiah he [the king of Babylon] blinded, after which the king of Babylon bound him with copper fetters and brought him to Babylon and put him in the house of custody until the day of his death." Even Jeremiah was handcuffed along with the multitude of captives. But Nebuzaradan the chief of Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguard released him.—Jer. 52:11; 40:1-6.

PUNISHMENT OF JERUSALEM JUSTIFIED

Jehovah was justified in causing this "chain" of captives and exiles to be forged. Why? Well, the judgments that the courts of the land handed down and executed caused the shedding of innocent blood; or because of the wickedness of the people those courts had to handle many capital crimes involving blood. The situation was as Hosea had told Israel years earlier: "There are the pronouncing of curses and practicing of deception and murdering and stealing and committing of adultery that have broken forth, and acts of bloodshed have touched other acts of bloodshed."—Hos. 4:2.

Jerusalem was indeed "full of violence," despite its being the center of religious worship at the temple of Jehovah. This made it all the more imperative that Jehovah bring punishment. Whom would he use to fasten the symbolic chain upon them? Jehovah answers:

> "I will bring in the worst ones of the nations, and they will certainly take possession of their houses, and I will cause the pride of the strong ones to cease, and their sanctuaries must be profaned."—Ezek. 7:24.

The "worst ones of the nations" were the Babylonians. The mere mention of their name instilled fear in the nations. At that time Babylon held the position of the Third World Power of Bible history. She was unbeatable, not even the great power of Egypt being able to hold her in check. Speaking to the "leader" of ancient Tyre, Ezekiel called the Babylonians "the tyrants of the nations." (Ezek. 28: 1, 2, 7) Babylon constituted a very great

threat to Jerusalem, more than any other nation had been.

Jerusalem was a difficult city to capture, but the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar broke through its wall after a siege of about eighteen months. (2 Ki. 25:1-4) Afterward they took "possession of their houses," burning all the houses of the great men with fire. They profaned "their sanctuaries," tearing down and burning the temple of Jehovah.—2 Ki. 25:9, 13-17; 2 Chron. 36:17-19.

"The pride of the strong ones" was caused to cease when King Zedekiah, the anointed one of the line of David, was captured, blinded, and taken to Babylon, and the chief ones of the priesthood were slaughtered, including the chief priest Seraiah and the second priest Zephaniah. Also Nebuchadnezzar put to death the city's chief officers.—2 Ki. 25:18-21.

NO PEACE OR HELP FROM GOD

It was indeed a terrible retribution, but a deserved one, for those inside the doomed city. Jehovah described in advance to Ezekiel what would actually happen:

> "There will come anguish, and they will certainly seek peace but there will be none. There will come adversity upon adversity, and there will occur report upon report, and people will actually seek a vision from a prophet, and the law itself will perish from a priest and counsel from elderly men. The king himself will go into mourning; even a chieftain will clothe himself with desolation, and the very hands of the people of the land will get disturbed."—Ezek. 7:25-27a.

With the sword of warfare outside the city and utter famine and pestilence inside, confusion reigned. It was "adversity upon adversity," and each report was one increasing the fear and despair. Oh, yes, they sought peace, but there was none, for the reason that they sought it in the wrong way. They wanted peace to continue while they went the same disobedient way they had practiced prior to the siege. Through the prophet Jeremiah Jehovah had instructed them to go out in unconditional surrender to the Babylonians. If they had done this, Jehovah *would* have seen to it that their lives were spared. But they did not have faith in their Sovereign God.

Therefore, it was of no use for them to go to a prophet to "seek a vision." They had the word of God's true prophet Jeremiah, that the city would fall. God was not going to contradict himself and give them a message of peace through another prophet. The law as given by the priest, who was against priest Jeremiah, was to "perish." The counsel by the princes and elderly men was of no value. In fact, it was fear of his princes that Zedekiah used as an excuse not to obey the instructions of Jehovah through Jeremiah. So he went "into mourning." (Jer. 38:14-24) Likewise each of the chieftains of the land, because of the hopeless state of the city, could only rip his garments apart in expression of inward despair and "clothe himself with desolation."

What were the people to do? With their leaders in such a state of grief and confusion, they did not know what to do with their hands, with what to employ them. But they shared the blame with the king and the priests and elderly men, for they all had pursued a bad, corrupt, idolatrous way in spite of Jehovah's warnings. That is why God said:

> "According to their way I shall act toward them, and with their judgments I shall judge them; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah."—Ezek. 7:27b.

God had made a covenant with Israel. He lived up to the terms of the covenant to bless them when they were obedient. As the Keeper of his covenants, Jehovah also had to act toward them "according to their way" when they broke that covenant, which they did, flagrantly and high-handedly. There was no justice obtainable

in the courts of the land. Also, many were the cases of murder. Bribery flourished. Innocent persons suffered. In view of all these things, could the Sovereign Lord Jehovah deal with the Jews as though he were a God different from the God with whom their forefathers had made a solemn covenant through the mediator Moses?

Therefore, Jehovah judged them "with their judgments," that is, with the judgments that applied to them according to the law of his covenant. It was fair and equitable, in trueness to himself that he did it. He left them under no misapprehensions as to who he is. They had to know that he was the same Jehovah as the one with whom their forefathers entered the covenant, and that he does not change. They had to know that he is Jehovah, the eternal God of righteousness, truth and justice.

SIMILAR DISTRESS COMING UPON CHRISTENDOM

Look around at Christendom. Do we see a comparison with ancient Jerusalem? Is not her realm "full of bloodstained judgment"? Is she not, even in her religious centers and strongholds, "full of violence"?

Like Jerusalem, Christendom has been instructed as to the right way to go. She has been warned of the consequences of wrongdoing or error against God. What, then, can she expect?

Already there is adversity upon adversity coming upon Christendom's churches, with their failing church attendance and the loss of ministers and revenues. Her clergymen no longer give the people guidance from God's law, and they have no realistic, believable "vision" as to any improved conditions ahead.

But these adversities are only preliminary to the "great tribulation" shortly to break upon Christendom. Then the "worst ones of the nations," the worst as far as Christendom is concerned, namely, the radical, godless political and secular elements will show no respect for her sacred things. The law of her priesthood and clergy will be disregarded. It will be a time of great mourning for her worldly-wise elders and ecclesiastical leaders. Those who still cling to her institutions will be 'disturbed in their hands,' not knowing what to do to save the religious system.

It should be no surprise to those who read and have faith in the Bible, to hear that these things are coming upon Christendom's churches. All God's judgments are written down. It is unmistakably plain that he will judge fornicators and adulterers (Heb. 13:4), sex perverts, idolaters, liars, murderers and those practicing spiritism (Rev. 21:8; 22:15), hypocrites (Matt. 23:29-33) and all those who defile the worship of God, particularly those who do so under the claim of serving him. —1 Cor. 3:17.

Thereby it will be known to Christendom and to all onlookers that Jehovah God is the Sovereign Lord, who will 'by no means give exemption from punishment,' and will pay back to their faces those who defy him.—Ex. 34:7; Deut. 7:10.

Each person today who sees what God's Word says about Jehovah's just action against wrongdoers should ask himself: Will I learn that he is also "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth" toward those who desire to do what is right? (Ex. 34:6) Will I come to be a 'guest in his tent' by practicing what is right and clean? (Ps. 15:1-3) Jehovah did not let Jeremiah or Ebed-melech and certain others die when the "tyrants of the nations" took Jerusalem. He can protect those who learn and follow his righteous way today even though the "worst ones of the nations" may run rampant and destroy Christendom.

Yes, the period beginning with Christendom's judgment is a "great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." But God will provide protection, so that 'some flesh will be saved.' And he will even punish the "worst ones of the nations" just as he later punished Babylon for her presumptuousness in exalting herself against him. In this way all the wicked will be annihilated, "so that it will not leave to them either root or bough." Let all who love God now seek peace with him and live.—Matt. 24:21, 22; Mal. 4:1.

TO CONFORM OR NOT TO CONFORM?

THIS question faces youth constantly. It comes up in the home, at school, and in association with others at work and in play.

Helpful facts that young people want to know

It is an important question. For by their conforming or not conforming, their lives are shaped and molded. This greatly affects their search for happiness.

THE SOURCES OF PRESSURES TO CONFORM

Where do the pressures to conform come from? Both from outside us and from inside us.

Those with whom you associate, both young and old, daily exercise influence on you. They influence you to see things the way they see them, or do things the way they do them. Some want you to conform to one thing, others to another. Often the influences are exactly opposite.

But much of the pressure comes from inside us. We all have a natural tendency to imitate others. You probably not only look like your parents but also talk like them, have certain mannerisms like theirs. You speak the language (or languages) that people around you speak, probably eat the kinds of food they eat.

But much more serious is the fact that we tend to imitate others in their standards of conduct, their attitudes and outlook on life. Can you control this molding effect? And, if so, how?

DESIRE FOR CHANGE

Today, many young people are disappointed and frustrated by what they see around them. No doubt you see many things you object to and rightly so. No honest person will deny that a tremendous amount of bad is now done on earth. Conformity to what is bad does not bring changes for the good.

Well, then, should you admire and want to be like many young people today who say they do not intend to 'conform to anything or anyone'? They say they are going to be 'absolutely free and independent,' just doing strictly their 'own thing.' Real-

ly, a little thinking tells us that this is just as impossible as trying to please everyone.

For example, for them even to begin to be *really* independent they would have to grow and prepare all their own food, make all their own clothes and do all the other things of life for themselves. Why, they would even have to invent their own private language, so as not to conform to the language of their country, with its rules of grammar.

SOME CONFORMITY ESSENTIAL TO LIFE

Really, we all have to conform to certain things just to stay alive, do we not? None of us can live without breathing air or drinking water, so we must conform to these features of earthly life or stop living. When you wait for a speeding truck to pass before you cross a highway, are you not conforming to the circumstances out of concern for your safety? Because, after all, how free and independent would you be if you became a corpse?

There has to be agreement on certain matters if people are to live and work together successfully. How could a group of men ever construct anything if they did not agree on standards of measurement, if each one used his own set of measures? Can you imagine what a house that they might build would look like? And how would you like to play a game—say a game of football—where each person just made up his own rules and even changed the rules whenever he wanted to, right in the middle of a play? Or what if you had a job where the employer raised or lowered your wages, and either paid you or did not pay you, just according to the way he happened to feel at the time?

The big thing, then, is not just being able to find fault or disagree with the way things are done. Anyone can do that. The big thing is coming up with solutions, ways to correct and improve matters. This is true at home, in school, at our place of work or anywhere else. Complaining just for the sake of complaining accomplishes nothing. Conformity can often be the wiser course. It can make our homelife pleasanter, our schoolwork more effective and our secular work more enjoyable and rewarding.

Yes, we can save ourselves a lot of headaches and heartaches if we benefit from others' experience and wholesome influence. And when it comes to experience, surely we must admit that there is no one better prepared to give us the right influence than God. As man's Creator, he knows man best. And his viewpoint has the backing of his having observed mankind's actions and efforts over thousands of years. His Word, the Bible, gives us the guidelines we need in order to know when to conform and when not to conform.

WHEN CONFORMITY IS DANGEROUS

The Bible, however, shows that we definitely should not conform ourselves to much that is around us. For example, the apostle Paul tells us: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Or, as *The New Testament in Modern English* expresses part of his words: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold."—Rom. 12:2.

The reason why we should not 'be fashioned after this system of things' is that the present systems are not conformed to God's righteous ways and are faced with destruction. But they pressure us to be like them. If we weaken, they will 'squeeze us into their mold.'

We can begin to weaken in small ways. Often the desire for popularity is what starts the weakening process among many

young people. The word "popularity" comes from the same word as "people." Being popular really means being a 'people pleaser.' We all, of course, have a natural desire to be liked by others. But this can be a trap to us. Even though we know that something is wrong and know what the right thing is to do, the fear of becoming unpopular can make us hesitate in taking the right course. That is one of the reasons why Proverbs 29:25 warns us: "Trembling at men is what lays a snare, but he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected."

One thing is sure: we cannot possibly please everyone. So, why not be concerned about pleasing the One who matters most? The psalmist David wrote of Jehovah God: "With you is the source of life." "You will cause me to know the path of life. Rejoicing to satisfaction is with your face; there is pleasantness at your right hand forever." (Ps. 36:9; 16:11) We certainly have good reason then to want to please Him above all others.

Perhaps your parents taught you from childhood what God's will is for his servants and helped you to understand what kind of conduct pleases God and what does not. Suppose, then, you now find yourself facing pressure—from schoolmates, young people in your neighborhood or others—to go against what you have been taught? They may try to get you to experiment with drugs, get drunk, or steal, or engage in some other immoral conduct. Or they might pressure you to do something that would violate Christian neutrality. What if refusing to conform to what they want brings ridicule on you, even threats? What will you do?

Rather than giving in to the pressure, show yourself to be a person of true discernment by keeping "cool of spirit." (Prov. 17:27) Stop and ask yourself these questions:

Why should it be so important to me to be accepted by these persons? If it means risking my health and life, is their approval worth it? Will their friendship bring benefits that are long lasting, or just momentary? How much do they really care about me? Would any one of them do what my parents did for me—care for me from infancy, provide all my needs, take care of me during illness? Then, what kind of person would I be if I now ignored my parents' good counsel just to be accepted by some loose-living boy or girl who never really did anything worth while for me? Will conforming to such a person or group help me to please the Life-Giver, God? Remember, his Word says: "You must not follow after the crowd for evil ends."—Ex. 23:2.

Because they were admiring and giving in to wrong influence of selfish persons, the apostle Paul had to reprimand some Christians in the congregation at Corinth, Greece. "In fact," Paul told them, "you put up with whoever enslaves you, whoever devours what you have, whoever grabs what you have, whoever exalts himself over you, whoever strikes you in the face." (2 Cor. 11:20) Really, how much sense does it make to seek the friendship of persons who just use us for what they can get out of us, perhaps at the same time treating us as inferiors while they make themselves appear very "big"? The Bible says you should serve God "with your power of reason."—Rom. 12:1.

Often the pressure to conform is subtle. Fads in clothing and hairstyles exercise pressures simply because they are "popular" among certain groups that are prominent. Conforming to these fads may seem like a small thing in itself. But what is behind the fad?

Is it just an attempt to present an attractive appearance in a somewhat different way? Then conformity may not be

particularly objectionable. On the other hand, is it motivated by the desire to be outstanding, startlingly different, thereby expressing a lot of pride and desire to 'outshine' others? Or is there motivation toward encouraging loose conduct in sexual matters, or the use of clothes or hairstyle to express rebellion? Then the question of conforming or not becomes a serious one.

The Bible tells us of one who let pride rule him and lead him to the point of rebelling against God. That was God's adversary Satan the Devil. Do we want to conform ourselves in any way to his image and, in effect, become his "children"? (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10-12) Or do we want to be like God's Son who refused to conform himself to the wrong ways of the world even though put under the greatest pressure anyone has ever experienced? Instead of conforming to the world, Jesus could say, "I have conquered the world." —John 16:33.

Refusal to conform will seldom be easy. But remember this: the person who courageously stands up for what he knows to be right is usually admired by many. True, certain ones will speak disparagingly of him, but this is because they want to justify their own wrong course by trying to pull him down to their same low level of life. Yet, inside themselves even those who jeer and mock often secretly admire the conviction of the young man or young woman who holds firm for what he or she believes to be right and true. They may wish they had such strength.

Yes, rather than being conformed to this world, we too can 'conquer the world' and gain God's approval and the unending happiness that His approval can bring us.

RESPONDING TO GODLY TRAINING

from Infancy

THE Bible, at Proverbs 22:6, says: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it." Since the principle applies to girls too, I consider myself blessed to have parents who did just so.

I was born in the year 1919 in Trinidad. Jehovah's Christian witnesses were then helping my parents to study the Bible. So my parents started quite early to train their ten children in a godly way.

Very often we were taught with the aid of pictures, such as those in a book called "Scenario of the Photo-Drama of Creation," which illustrated the true-life story of the Bible. For example, my parents would show me a picture of Noah building the ark, and then ask: Why was Noah saved when the flood came? Thus I learned quite early that Noah and his family survived because they were righteous. This made a lasting impression on me, so that I wanted to be like Noah, but never like the people who were destroyed by the flood.

Besides the use of pictures, my parents trained me by relating experiences they had had and which would help me to appreciate Bible principles. For example, my father related an experience that taught me that true Christians never compromise their faith. He said that when I was about

five years of age, his employer, under pressure from a clergyman, gave him the ultimatum: "I am giving you thirty days to choose between your God and your job." My father said that he knew God came first, and that he did not need even one day to choose. As a result, he was immediately dismissed from his job and left stranded in Tobago, about eighty-two miles north of Trinidad. My father was happy he did not compromise. Jehovah's spirit moved his Christian brothers in Trinidad to help us move back there.

Singing songs of praise to Jehovah is another feature of homelife that I enjoyed and which also was a help in training me. My father obtained one of the songbooks produced particularly for children and first published by the Watch Tower Society in 1925; it was a small hardbound book of eighty songs with music entitled "Kingdom Hymns." He helped us to learn to sing the songs, and as we learned them we would sing while we worked at home.

I still remember some of the words of the song entitled "Poor and Needy Though I Be." Here is the first verse: "Poor and needy though I be, God Almighty cares for me; Gives me clothing, shelter, food, Gives me all I have of good." The third verse: "Though I suffer here awhile, He has promised earth shall smile; When this time of trouble's past, Blessing shall be mine at last." I learned from this song to thank God for what I got, to be contented and to look to him for blessings.

Another way, a most important one, by which I was trained was by my parents bringing me to the meetings of the Christian congregation. Sometimes we would have to walk to meetings; other times we went by buggy or horse-drawn carriage with a convertible top and a rumble seat at the back. These meetings were important in my life.

As I responded to godly training, my appreciation for Jehovah and his purposes kept growing. So I was always happy to accompany my mother in the door-to-door preaching work. At first, after she spoke, I would hand a book, booklet or handbill to the householder. In the year 1933 I got started on my own. Then in March 1939 I made my dedication to serve Jehovah and symbolized it by water baptism.

Responding to godly training, I wanted more and more to do things for others. A fine opportunity came in 1943, when I was employed in a trade union office in Port of Spain. At that time there was a ban on our Bible literature due to the government's misunderstanding of our Christian work. However, the office where I worked could receive all kinds of foreign papers without any difficulty; therefore I used the address of my place of employment to get copies of the *Watchtower* magazine from a Witness in Grenada. Though I did not get enough to go around to all the congregation, I helped to make typewritten copies, so that more of us could get this important spiritual food.

MAKING FULL-TIME PREACHING MY CAREER

In responding to the early training of my parents, I always attended meetings of the Christian congregation and read the publications of the Watch Tower Society. These, and especially the 1945 *Watchtower* that discussed chapter twelve of the Bible book of Ecclesiastes, greatly influenced me. Verses one and three of that Bible chapter impressed me most: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the win-

dows be darkened."—*Authorized Version.*

The article explained that youths should serve God before "the evil days" come, that is, old age with its physical problems. I reasoned that since I was twenty-six, and would soon be leaving my youthful days, there was no time to delay. I arranged my affairs to make my career the full-time preaching of God's Word.

So in August 1946 I resigned from my secular job, and started the full-time preaching work in Grenada. I spent three years there, and two persons with whom I studied the Bible were baptized.

In 1949 I went to Trinidad for a Christian assembly, and while there I received an application form for the missionary school of Gilead. I filled out the application because I wanted to do whatever Jehovah directed, and I viewed this opportunity of being trained for missionary work as an evidence of blessings from Jehovah. On January 29, 1950, I left Trinidad for New York to attend the fifteenth class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

LIFE AT GILEAD SCHOOL

At Gilead School I learned a great deal more from the Bible than I knew before, though I had read it, and this deepened my appreciation for Jehovah and his purposes. After school hours I was assigned to do some work, and I enjoyed it, whether it was repairing clothing, darning socks, making beds, or picking strawberries. In this fifteenth class I was one of 120 students, all very busy people. Living, studying and working with so many others proved to be beneficial in that I learned to enjoy association with the variety of personalities in Jehovah's organization.

Graduation of our class on Sunday, July 30, was a special feature of the first day of the "Theocracy's Increase Assembly," July 30 to August 6, 1950, at New York's Yankee Stadium. On graduation day the school's instructors, the Society's president and vice-president all gave fine counsel and encouragement. The talk "The Way of Success," based on Joshua 1:8, made a lasting impression on me. I can still remember the opening words: "Jehovah is conducting a Government school of success. There is nothing else on earth like it. Since it graduated a Master Instructor it has been in operation for nineteen hundred years." I learned that my graduation from Gilead was not the end of study and schooling for me, but it was the beginning of living under a greater responsibility before God to keep on studying and using the knowledge gained to help others to get on the way of life.

Never before had I been among such a great crowd of Jehovah's people. And never before had I realized that responding to godly training while one is young would lead to such a blessing.

In October I left for Guyana, South America, my new home, to continue full time in Kingdom service as a missionary.

MISSIONARY WORK IN GUYANA

When I arrived in Guyana, I found the climate to be tropical, similar to Trinidad, where I had come from. Here there are the same fruits as grown in Trinidad, such as papayas, pineapples, mangoes and a wide variety of bananas. These similarities between my homeland and my new assignment helped me to adjust.

When offering Bible magazines here on the streets of Georgetown, the capital, it is not strange to meet Africans, Amerindians, Chinese, East Indians and Portuguese. They can all understand English because that is the official language.

In 1952 my partner and I were assigned to help a small congregation at Hope Town, about eleven miles from New Amsterdam, across the Berbice River. The

first Sunday after receiving the assignment, we crossed on the 6:15 a.m. boat, taking our bicycles with us. We rode about seven miles to the starting point in pouring rain, and our work proved to be rewarding. I started a fruitful Bible study with a teen-age girl. The next week her grandparents, her mother and two younger sisters were present for the study, and a brother and sister who lived away from home attended when they visited. All eight of these persons eventually became Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

In 1953 we were privileged to bring the good news of God's kingdom to the people who lived along the banks of the Berbice River itself. We used the boat that served the people twice a week, traveling from New Amsterdam to Paradise, a trip that took about twenty hours. Two of my Christian sisters from the congregation went with me. We planned to spend a week preaching the good news along this area. Shortly after we boarded the boat, we met a family and told them about our work. The parents asked us to come to their home first to teach them the Bible. So we accepted their hospitality.

It turned out that, though hospitable, they were not particularly interested in learning about God's kingdom. So we left the next morning. Each day we continued up the river by using tracks along the bank, or getting a ride in a small boat. We preached to all we met along the way.

When our food supply became depleted, we found that there were no shops around from which to buy food. While we were reviewing among ourselves the fact that Jehovah always provides for those who faithfully do his will, someone offered to help us by taking us in his boat upriver to where food could be bought.

How happy we were to have shared the good news with so many people who lived along that river! One of the girls from the first home where we spent a night is married now, and we met her one day in a store. She asked me to come and study the Bible with her and her children.

In 1963 I was assigned to Georgetown, where I have had many rich blessings in helping others to know God's truths. Remembering my early training, I have found it helpful, when conducting Bible studies, to use pictures to aid the young ones who cannot read to pay attention and to learn something, and also to help older ones to get the point that the picture illustrates.

I have also been able to use songs and experiences to help others, much as my parents helped me. For example, recently I discussed Song 87 in the book *"Singing and Accompanying Yourselves with Music in Your Hearts"* with one of my Christian sisters who was discouraged. The song, based on Psalm 55, is entitled "Throw Your Burden on Jehovah!" This helped her to throw her burden on Jehovah and she was encouraged to sing the song when feeling discouraged. As for my use of experiences in helping others—one person with whom I am studying the Bible was stimulated to straighten out her life through an experience I related to her that showed what another Bible student did to overcome the same problem.

When I came to Guyana in 1950, there were 206 persons proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom. Now this number has grown to over one thousand, due to the hard work of many of Jehovah's witnesses.

Making the full-time preaching work my career has proved to be a blessing for me. It has made me feel closer to Jehovah, because I spend more time in learning and teaching about him. The way I feel about this closeness is expressed at Psalm 125:2: "Jehovah is all around his people from now on and to time indefinite."

How happy I am that I responded to godly parental training!

● How do Jehovah's witnesses view capital punishment?—U.S.A.

Jehovah's Christian witnesses adhere to what the Holy Scriptures present as God's view of capital punishment. They recognize that Jehovah God, as the Creator of man, has the absolute right to set forth laws that must be obeyed if one is to continue enjoying life. Accordingly, when God determines that certain people merit the death penalty because of their persistent practice of sin, he can rightly take their life. Two notable examples of such capital punishment executed by God are the destruction of disobedient mankind in the Flood and the later destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. —2 Pet. 2:5, 6.

As Lawgiver, Judge and Supreme Sovereign, Jehovah God can also delegate to others the authority to execute lawbreakers. After the flood of Noah's day, for example, he authorized humans to administer capital punishment for deliberate murder. We read: "Anyone shedding man's blood, by man will his own blood be shed, for in God's image he made man." (Gen. 9:6) The human authority, by executing the murderer, would be acting as "God's minister, an avenger to express wrath upon the one practicing what is bad."—Rom. 13:4.

Of course, some may question whether human authorities can rightly execute individuals for acts that God's Word does not designate as capital offenses. That is a responsibility the governments must bear before God. But there is no Scriptural basis for saying that governments are condemned for prescribing the death penalty for murderers. God's view is that the person deliberately taking someone else's life forfeits his own life. Today, however, many governments are abandoning God's view of capital punishment, this doubtless contributing to increased crime and violence.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

September 3: Loving Oversight of the Congregation of God. Page 456. Songs to Be Used: 16, 85.

September 10: Cooperating Fully with God's Appointed Ones. Page 462. Songs to Be Used: 27, 31.