The WATCHTOWER

JEHOVAH
A Helper Without Equal

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

THE BEST FORTY YEARS OF MY LIFE

AUGUST 15, 1976

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

The WATCHTOWER

August 15, 1976
Vol. 97, Number 16

A watchtower enables a person to see far into the distance and announce to others what is coming. Can a magazine serve similarly in our day? Yes, from its first issue (July 1879) onward, *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, has done just that.

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We know that many sincere persons would appreciate a discussion of these things in their own home with a qualified person. One of Jehovah's Witnesses will be glad to call on you free of charge. To arrange for this, simply write the publishers of this magazine or contact Jehovah's Witnesses locally.

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Mildness

STRENGTH OR WEAKNESS?

WHICH is more pleasurable—a stormy, gusty, bitterly cold day or a balmy, mild spring one? Who is more pleasurable to be around—a person who is harsh, cutting with words, easily irritated, or one who keeps his balance under trying circumstances and deals reasonably with others? With which person can you work to the best advantage?

When we enjoy mild weather we do not think of it as being unstable, unsatisfactory and somehow inferior to stormy weather. Likewise, if a person is mild it does not mean that he is weak or less capable of getting things done than is a hot-headed person.

Mildness, therefore, does not mean weakness. Nor is it completely unruffled calmness or soft speech, ignoring the importance or urgency of a matter. For "mild," often rendered "meek" in the Bible, translates the Greek word *praus*. William Barclay, a Greek scholar, says: "There is gentleness in *praus* but behind the gentleness there is the strength of steel."*

Another dictionary remarks that the Bible word for "mildness" refers to "that temper of spirit in which we accept [God's] dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting." This work also says: "[Mildness] consists not in a person's outward behaviour only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather, it is an inwrought grace of the soul." This agrees with the Bible, which points out that true mildness is not an inborn quality but is a fruit of the spirit of God. (Gal. 5:22, 23) It comes primarily from developing a relationship with God.

Therefore, mildness is not a mere outward display of calmness, a soft-spoken manner. It reflects God's strong but mild personality. Some persons may *speak* softly and appear to be ever so kind. Such ones, though, may be like 'an iron fist in a velvet glove,' actually covering up a harsh nature with soft speech. Or they may be unbending and unreasonable. But one genuinely mild knows that reasonableness and balance should always be observed, but firmness and straightforwardness must not be lacking.—Eccl. 3:1, 2, 7.

Jesus said of himself: "I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart." (Matt. 11:29) Yet he was firm when necessary. When an officer of the Jewish high priest slapped Jesus during his trial, Jesus said: "If I spoke wrongly, bear witness concerning the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit me?" (John 18:22, 23) Jesus also corrected the apostle Peter very forcefully when Peter unwittingly tried to break Jesus' integrity.—Matt. 16:21-23.

* *A New Testament Word Book.*

On the other hand, even though Jesus had great power at his command (he could summon twelve legions of angels at any time), he never became harsh or unreasonable. (Matt. 26:53) Though he did good and never exalted himself, he was treated far worse than a slave but, as the apostle Peter said: "When he was being reviled, he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he did not go threatening, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously." —1 Pet. 2:23.

So the mild person will undergo much without resorting to harshness. But there are times when he may depart from soft speech with those who manifest a disobedient or rebellious spirit.—1 Cor. 4:21.

Mildness consists, not merely in the *tone,* but primarily in *what* is said. Therefore, true mildness requires the exercise of Scriptural wisdom. James spoke of a "mildness that belongs to wisdom." (Jas. 3:13) The Proverbs say: "An answer, when mild, turns away rage," and "a mild tongue itself can break a bone." (Prov. 15:1; 25:15) The answer must contain wisdom in order to move others. Such an answer can break the hardest opposition.

When the woman Abigail appealed to David, it was not so much the softness of Abigail's tone, but her strong, sensible argument, yet at the same time her being respectful and mild, that turned David back from the heat of anger when he was on his way to slaughter Nabal's household. Abigail said to David:

> "Please, do not let my lord set his heart upon this good-for-nothing man Nabal, for, as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and senselessness is with him. . . . And now, my lord, as Jehovah is living and as your soul is living, Jehovah has held you back from entering into bloodguilt and having your own hand come to your salvation. . . . Because Jehovah will do to my lord the good toward you according to all that he has spoken."—1 Sam. 25:23-35.

Likewise, Gideon gave a mild answer with wisdom to the tribe of Ephraim, which tried to pick a quarrel with him. Gideon was not commissioned by God to engage in intertribal warfare, and he did not want trouble with Ephraim. His mild reply disarmed them completely. He answered: "What now have I done in comparison with you? Are not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the grape gathering of Abiezer [or, the Abiezrites, Gideon's fellow warriors]? It was into your hand that God gave Midian's princes Oreb and Zeeb, and what have I been able to do in comparison with you?" As a result, "their spirit calmed down toward him." True mildness brings forth mildness on the part of others.—Judg. 8:1-3.

If a person does not normally display mildness, it may point to haughtiness on his part. Humility accompanies true mildness, for the Scriptures admonish Christians to walk "with complete lowliness of mind and mildness."—Eph. 4:2.

Mildness is a requisite for all in the congregation. Elders are to 'instruct with mildness' and to restore erring ones in mildness. (2 Tim. 2:25; Gal. 6:1) Newer and younger ones should "accept with mildness the implanting of the word," not resisting it.—Jas. 1:21.

And while the men of the congregation lead in prayer, speak from the platform and teach, the women can accomplish their share for the congregation's spirituality and well-being. How? The apostle Peter says that they can do it by letting their adornment be "the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God." (1 Pet. 3:4) Yes, material clothing may be beautiful when new. Nevertheless, it wears out, deteriorates and even goes out of style. But a mild spirit is "incorruptible," and God will preserve the one who has such a spirit.

THE BEST FORTY YEARS of My Life

WHEN I was only five years old, I had four younger brothers and sisters, as well as six who were older. Mother died that year—in 1907—and I think that having one baby right after another may have contributed to her death.

My father, a hardworking immigrant to the United States from Italy, was forced to put us five younger ones in a county home. As the eldest, I had the responsibility of looking after the others. Often I was whipped with a strap, sometimes for things over which I had no control, such as when my baby brother wet himself. Somehow, I was supposed to prevent this.

On his regular visits Dad could see how unhappy we were, and he was heartbroken. After about a year he remarried, and the family was together again. Conditions were better, yet those early experiences deeply affected me. I think that they made me more sensitive to all the little wrongs that were done, such as the lying and cheating that everyone seemed to do.

RELIGION AN ANSWER?

Although Dad and Mom believed in God, I cannot ever remember their going to church, and I never went either. It was about all Dad could do to keep our big family going. But I believe that there was deeper reason for his not going to church. I can remember his saying: "The priests aren't men of principle."

One thing that bothered Dad was the way the priests would come out to his horse-drawn wagon and pick out the best of his fruit. He would carry it into their quarters for them, and in the basement he saw that they had the best of wines and everything. "They live on the fat of the land," is the way he would put it. So I think it was such experiences that caused Dad gradually to get away from religion.

No doubt it was Dad's religious background that caused him, at times, to act without principle. As a boy, I worked with Dad in his fruit and vegetable business in New Haven, Connecticut. On occasion he would say, "Go ahead, son, pick that up too, pick it up and take it along," even though it was a box of fruit for which we had not paid.

I figured that if this is what we had to do to get by, then we had to do it. So I would go along with such things, but it went against my grain. I was happy that these occasions were rare. I of-

ten wondered why there was so much injustice and underhandedness in the world.

When I was in the fifth grade I worked after school for an elderly couple. In the course of housecleaning one day, they gave me a King James Bible that they were discarding, as well as the book *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* by ex-priest Charles Chiniquy. I had never yet seen a Bible, but I wanted to know something about religion.

Young as I was, I read this book by the ex-priest with great interest. It made the hairs on my young head stand up, and from then on I had no use for the churches. But especially did I read and reread the Bible with zest and joy. It became my favorite book. Reading it caused me to think more like an adult. I developed a deep interest in spiritual things and in the problems of life. When I read how the Bible describes the superhuman evil influence of Satan the Devil on people, this opened my eyes a little as to why there are so many injustices in the world.

What particularly interested me was the account in Matthew chapter 4 where it tells about Satan's tempting Jesus three times. Each time Jesus fought back the Devil's temptations by quoting from God's Word, saying, "It is written." (Matt. 4: 3-10; Deut. 8:3; 6:16; 5:9) This made a deep impression on me. I thought, 'If Jesus, the perfect Son of God, referred to God's Word three times to answer Satan, then what better book could there be? What better book could I use?'

This information was enough to make me a firm believer in the Bible, and I had a keen desire for Bible knowledge. But when anyone at home saw me reading the Bible, they would poke fun and accuse me of being pious. They even cautioned me that if I read the Bible too much I might go crazy.

"This information was enough to make me a firm believer in the Bible."

MAKING MY OWN WAY

Things did not go too well at home with our family. So when my eldest brother and two sisters left home and got married, they took turns at having me live with them. By my early teens I was making my own way.

I shall never forget my first regular job. It was in a corset factory. I received ten cents an hour, and worked ten hours a day. After that I did many types of work, from pick-and-shovel labor to operating all kinds of factory machines. In time I had such positions as foreman of factory operation, chief inspector and sales manager. I even worked as manager of a chain store, and I also became involved in political life.

"What the churches teach about death and the condition of the dead never did seem right to me."

Yet conditions still bothered me. On the one hand, there was the theft by employees and, on the other hand, the unscrupulous business and political practices. It irritated me that a person who wanted to do right always seemed to get the worst of things, and the one who did wrong seemed to have it a lot better. Then there were the nagging questions: What is the purpose of my being on earth? What will my future be?

TURNING POINT IN LIFE

Meanwhile, in 1925 I married a Catholic girl from Meriden, Connecticut. I explained

"All the money in the world could not have changed my mind."

to her how I felt about the Catholic religion and that I believed in the Bible, what little I then knew about it. In the first four years of our marriage we had two fine boys, and in 1935 we had yet another son. But prior to that, something happened that proved a turning point in my life.

It was in 1933 that my wife obtained several booklets on Bible themes. For several nights I stayed up practically all night reading them, looking up all the scriptures in my Bible. This was just what I had been waiting for! My wife would call and ask me if I knew what time it was, but I was so absorbed I had no consciousness or care about time.

What the churches teach about death and the condition of the dead never did seem right to me. They say that we have an immortal soul that leaves our body at death and, if a person has lived a "bad" life, his soul is tormented forever in a hell of fire. But from what I was reading I could see that the Bible teaches that the soul can and *does* die. Never does the Bible say that the soul is immortal, or that the soul continues a conscious existence after one dies.—Ezek. 18:4; Eccl. 9:5, 10.

Moreover, it was a wonderful thing to learn that the Bible "hell" is simply the common grave of mankind. This became so obvious! I checked the Bible where Jacob, who, in mourning for his son whom he thought had been killed, said: *"I will go down to my son into hell."* Similarly, I read where the faithful man Job prayed to God during his suffering: "Who will grant me this, *that thou mayst protect me in hell,* and hide me till thy wrath pass." (Gen. 37:35; Job 14:13, *Douay Version*) Clearly, hell could not be a place of torment if Job desired to go there!

Equally thrilling to me was the clearer understanding I was gaining about God. He has a personal name, as I read in my *King James Version:* "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." (Ps. 83:18) Yes, the name of the Almighty God is Jehovah, whereas Jesus Christ is Jehovah's son, the one whom God sent to earth. Jesus is therefore an entirely different, subordinate person. How glad I was to learn that the confusing Trinity doctrine, which says that Jesus and God are the same in substance, power and eternity, has no basis in the Bible, but comes from non-Christian religions!

These Bible truths changed my life, especially as I came to appreciate Jehovah's purpose to bring the dead back to life, as the Bible promises: "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) Yes, I began to see now how God's original purpose to have a paradise earth under a righteous heavenly rule will be fulfilled, and how God will give everyone opportunity to enjoy its blessings. (Matt. 6:9, 10; Rev. 21:3, 4) I was so grateful to God to know these things. But how could I show this gratitude?

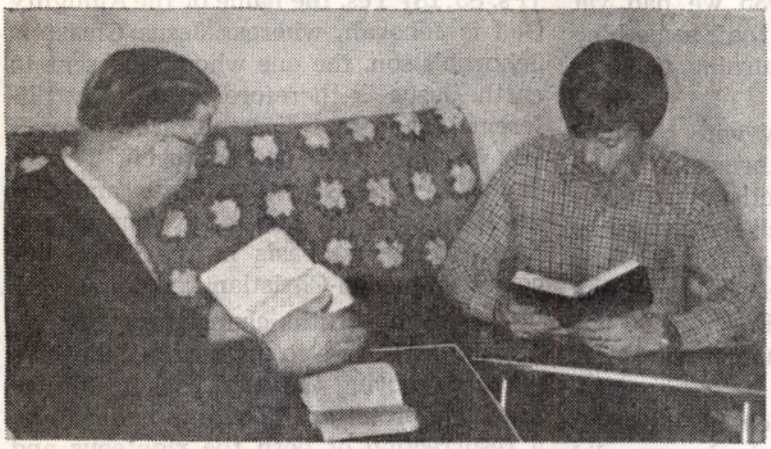
IMPORTANT DECISIONS

First, I decided to find the people who had brought us this information—Jehovah's Witnesses. About twenty-five of them met regularly in a small upstairs room in downtown New Haven. I began

"These Bible truths changed my life."

attending these meetings, and soon my family did too. Realizing the joy that these things brought me, I started sharing them with people at their homes, even as Jesus and his apostles had done.—Luke 10:2-11.

The early thirties were depression years, and times were hard. The banks failed and I lost my money. Eventually foreclosure proceedings started on property I owned. At this point my brother, a prominent attorney, offered me a fresh financial start, promising me a fine house in the country and several thousand dollars. But he gave me this condition: 'You give up this nonsense of being a Jehovah's Witness.'



Helping persons to obtain life-giving Bible knowledge has brought me great joy

As I listened, what came to mind was the occasion when Christ was tempted by Satan. Really, the decision was not difficult. I told my brother that I could not accept his offer, for as Jesus said: "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service." (Matt. 4:10) Actually, all the money in the world could not have changed my mind. My decision had been made to dedicate my life to God's service. The assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses in Washington, D.C., in May/June 1935 afforded me opportunity to symbolize this dedication by water baptism.

The following year I was appointed to be the presiding overseer of the small New Haven congregation. I now was faced with another decision: How would I use the rest of my life?

I was thirty-four years old, and I had acquired business experience and connections that I could perhaps use to achieve a comfortable life. Yet I realized that many people were living their lives as I once did, ignorant of God's grand purposes. So I went to Jehovah in prayer, expressing my heartfelt desire that I might have the fullest share possible in helping many persons to know and serve him.

After prayerful consideration I began pioneering, as the full-time preaching work is called by Jehovah's Witnesses. And I can say that the past forty years spent in this activity have been the best years of my life. In 1937 the special pioneer work was begun, and I was one of the some 200 pioneers chosen to start that work, remaining in it for nineteen years.

We are by no means materially rich, yet during all these years I have been able to obtain part-time employment to care for our family. For the past ten years I have worked as maintenance man for a small tool-making factory. Seeing our rather humble circumstances, people have asked: "How can you be happy when you have so little materially to show for years of work?"

Yet think: What is it that makes you happy—material things? Perhaps to some extent, but there surely are a lot of unhappy rich people. Jesus Christ said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) And what has made my last forty years so satisfying is that I have been able to give so freely, helping people to find a treasure that has made them happier than if I had given them a million dollars. How can that be?

Well, it is like the Bible says: "Happy is the man that has *found wisdom,* and the man that *gets discernment,* for having it as gain is better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself." It has been my pleasure, over the years, to be instrumental in helping scores of people to gain this wisdom and discernment of such incomparable value.—Prov. 3:13-18.

Many persons have thanked me for helping them to obtain this priceless treasure. In February 1972 I started a Bible study with a Yale University medical student. In 1970 he had been captain of the University's Ivy League football team. After a few months of Bible study, he began to realize the value of what we were studying. Meanwhile, his future wife was also studying. In time they both dedicated their lives to serve Jehovah God. On one occasion Richard said to me: "Brother Arpaia, you're more than a father to me. You've helped me so much." Experiences like that have truly brought joy to my life.

Although I have lived in the New Haven area all my life, I have had the pleasure of helping persons to get started in the Kingdom-preaching work who are now serving in many places in the world. Earlier this year the Kingdom Ministry School, a course of advanced training for elders of Jehovah's Witnesses, was held in New Haven. In the two classes this spring, there

The Kingdom Ministry School instructor, myself and five students with whom I had conducted home Bible studies

were five persons with whom I had at one time conducted home Bible studies.

In what other work could a person be instrumental in effecting such a beneficial change in the lives of so many people? It is truly a pleasure to see persons begin to change to a more wholesome way of thinking. To cite an example: In 1955 I was in London, England, to attend a Christian assembly. The husband of the family that I stayed with professed to be an atheist. One night after his wife and two children had gone to bed, he said: "You answer me one question and perhaps I will listen to you further."

"What is your question?" I asked.

"Where did God come from?"

"Oh, that is an easy question," I said.

> ***"You asked me, 'Where did God come from?' And I gave you God's answer."***

He looked at me with surprise. "Easy? What do you mean?"

I opened up the Bible (they had a *King James Version*) and read Psalm 90:2, which says: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

When I got through reading, he said: "Ah, bah!" He was disgusted.

"Well, here we are," I said, "man to man. The answer did not satisfy you. But let me ask you: Suppose your boy came and asked you a question, and you answered it for him but he did not appreciate the answer. So your son said, 'Ah, bah!' Would that please you?"

He looked at me kind of puzzled, and said: "No, I guess it would not please me. What are you getting at?"

"What I mean is this. You asked me, 'Where did God come from?' And I gave you God's answer, the answer that he inspired men to write. You do not appreciate it. Perhaps you do not understand it. But it is an easy answer to accept on one thing, *on faith.*"

"Why?" he asked.

"Well, suppose God said, 'So-and-So created me.' Then you would want to know who created So-and-So. Then suppose He said, 'So-So-and-So created So-and-So,' but there would be no ending to it. Yet here God tells you that he always has been and always will be, but you are not satisfied with that answer. This little brain that we have cannot fully comprehend it, cannot accept it because we see things come and go, humans included. And because you cannot comprehend that God always has existed, you are not satisfied. But this is what we need to accept on faith—the very fact that we see all the wonderful creation with its marvels gives sound basis for faith in such an ever-existing God."

This self-styled atheist responded and opened up and became like a little boy, asking: "Tell me more about the Bible." So we started studying the Bible, and when I left London I turned the study with him over to another Witness. This is the type of experience that has made the last forty years the best years of my life.

How would you feel if you received a wonderful gift? Grateful? Well, I consider the knowledge and understanding of God and his grand purposes to be a gift of inestimable value. And a reason why the past forty years have been the best years of my life is that the work I have been doing is that which Christ Jesus did and encouraged his followers to do. Knowledge of this has built up my faith and confidence in Jehovah's promises, for, as the Bible says: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name." (Heb. 6:10)
—*Contributed.*

Insight on the News

Loss of Respect

● "Those who knew Hastings Kamuzu Banda, now president of the African country of Malawi, when he was a student at Wilberforce Academy in the 1920s say they've lost their long-held respect for him," wrote Bette Owens in the Dayton, Ohio, "Daily News." Among such distressed persons is Miss Flora Isabel Askew, who taught Banda at Wilberforce. She is quoted as saying: "I heard he's committing atrocities against Jehovah's Witnesses and I said, 'Oh, my goodness, how could he have deteriorated into something like that?' "

Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi have experienced brutal persecution because they maintain Christian neutrality and therefore refuse to buy a political card that indicates membership in the Malawi Congress Party. (John 17:16; 18:36; Jas. 1:27) Yet, they show proper respect for governmental "superior authorities."—Rom. 13:1-7.

Political position alone does not assure widespread respect for a man of authority. Rather, he wins respect and a good name by fine words and deeds. Fittingly, the Bible says: "A [good] name is better than good oil." (Eccl. 7:1) So, should not sound judgment prompt Dr. Banda to use his authority to halt atrocities against Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi and thus regain a measure of the respect people once had for him?

Self-Mutilation Advocated?

● An eighteen-year-old student at the University of Washington recently gouged out his right eye and cut off his right hand. Campus police say that, en route to the hospital, the youth quoted these words: "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."—Matt. 5:29, 30, "Revised Standard Version."

Some who read the newspaper report of the mutilation incident may wonder how this statement by Jesus Christ is to be understood. The plucking out of the eye and the cutting off of the hand are here not to be applied literally.

The application to be made is stated in Colossians 3:5-7: "Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of those things the wrath of God is coming. In those very things you, too, once walked when you used to live in them." So, the proper course is, not to mutilate oneself, but to deaden one's body members toward sin.—1 Cor. 9:27.

Religion and Violence

● An estimated 18,000 to 20,000 persons have died during 14 months of civil war in Lebanon. "On-the-spot slayings and kidnappings on religious grounds have been daily occurrences," writes Henry Tanner in a special report to the New York "Times." However, this reporter states that he has "encountered as much courage, decency, character and thoughtfulness [in Lebanon] as he has seen anywhere." Why, then, is there such collective violence?

Correspondent Tanner says: "In the view of qualified analysts of the Lebanese character, religion has ceased to restrain violence in a relatively poor country that lies between the Arab world and the West but belongs to neither and that has become the arena for another clash—between waning traditional values and the crassest modern materialism."

Religion in general has failed to inculcate teachings that create appreciation for spiritual things and that would deter persons from resorting to violence. Certainly, nominal Christianity has failed to do so in Lebanon and elsewhere. Yet, Jehovah's Christian witnesses in that war-torn land and throughout the world have high regard for spiritual things, acting in a way that results in 'storing up treasures in heaven.'—Matt. 6:19-21.

Moreover, Jehovah's Witnesses shun violence because they follow the Biblical admonition to "pursue peace with all people." (Heb. 12:14) They have 'beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears, learning war no more.' (Isa. 2:3, 4) Indeed, true religion engenders appreciation for spiritual values and deters those practicing it from resorting to violence.—2 Cor. 10:3, 4.

"From where will my help come? My help is from Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth." —Ps. 121:1, 2.

JEHOVAH A Helper Without Equal

THE greatest helper we can possibly have is the Creator, Jehovah God. All living things on earth continue to benefit from the natural cycles vital for life that he put into operation ages ago. Were it not for man's greed and mismanagement of earth's resources, this planet could comfortably support a far greater human population without hurting plant and creature life. Rightly the inspired psalmist could say of Jehovah God: "You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing."—Ps. 145:16.

[2] Only on rare occasions has Jehovah God used his power to withhold sunshine and rain from those who acted contrary to his will. (Ex. 10:21; Amos 4:7) As a general rule, even unappreciative persons have benefited from his bountiful provisions. Jesus Christ called attention to this fact, saying: "He makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." —Matt. 5:45.

[3] If the Almighty shows such kindness even to ungrateful humans, how confident can we be that he will never forsake those who love him deeply! He "is a lover of righteousness and justice." (Ps. 33:5) We can, therefore, be sure that he will never ignore the needs of his people nor fail to answer their cries for help. God's faithful servant David observed: "Jehovah is near to all those calling upon him, to all those who call upon him in trueness. The desire of those fearing him he will perform, and their cry for help he will hear, and he will save them."—Ps. 145:18, 19.

1. Who is the greatest helper, and why?
2. How has Jehovah generally dealt with unappreciative humans?
3. What encouragement can God's servants draw from the way in which Jehovah has dealt with mankind in general?

UNMATCHED POWER TO HELP

[4] Nothing can stop Jehovah God from helping his people. He has the ability to render aid under all circumstances. His power is so great that it can keep the physical universe in existence for all eternity. This is evident from Psalm 148:2-6, where we are told that Jehovah God keeps the sun, moon and stars "standing forever, to time indefinite."

4. As is evident from Psalm 148:2-6, how great is Jehovah's power?

[5] Yes, Jehovah controls tremendous natural forces and can use these to accomplish his will. Pointing this out to his loyal servant Job, God said: "Have you entered into the storehouses of the snow, or do you see even the storehouses of the hail, which I have kept back for the time of distress, for the day of fight and war?" (Job 38:22, 23) When it is his purpose, Jehovah, through the operation of his spirit, can even cause and control earthquakes, direct lightning and dry up seas and rivers.—1 Sam. 14:15; 2 Sam. 22:15; Ps. 66:6; 74:15.

[6] The holy spirit or active force is like a powerful instrument always at Jehovah's disposal. When one of his servants faces a trialsome circumstance, the Almighty can, by means of his spirit, recall to that one's mind Scriptural principles and aid him to see how these apply in his case. (John 14:26) In this way the individual is strengthened to endure and to preserve fine conduct. Through the use of his spirit, Jehovah God can stir the hearts and minds of his servants to respond to the needs of fellow believers, coming to their aid. (Mark 10:29, 30) By means of his spirit, Jehovah may, on occasion, even motivate rulers to do what he desires. As Proverbs 21:1 says: "A king's heart is as streams of water in the hand of Jehovah. Everywhere that he delights to, he turns it."

[7] The Most High also has at his command millions of mighty angels. (Dan. 7:10) That he uses these to aid his servants on earth is shown at Psalm 34:7, where we read: "The angel of Jehovah is camping all around those fearing him, and he rescues them."

5. What power does Jehovah have over natural forces?
6. How can God's spirit come to the aid of true Christians in their time of need?

AN OUTSTANDING RECORD

[8] To give his servants a sure basis for faith in his matchless ability as a Helper, Jehovah God has provided a dependable record of many of his saving acts. That record, contained in the Bible, can do for

7. According to Psalm 34:7, whom can Jehovah use to help his people?
8. What can the Biblical record of Jehovah's saving acts do for us?

The eyes of Elisha's attendant were opened to see that Jehovah is a Helper without equal

us what a miraculous vision did for an attendant of the Hebrew prophet Elisha. This is what happened: A strong military force from Syria surrounded the Israelite city of Dothan, intent on seizing the prophet Elisha. Filled with fear, Elisha's attendant exclaimed: "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" "Do not be afraid," was Elisha's reply, "for there are more who are with us than those who are with them." Then "Elisha began to pray and say: 'O Jehovah, open his eyes, please, that he may see.' Immediately Jehovah opened the attendant's eyes, so that he saw; and, look! the mountainous region was full of horses and war chariots of fire all around Elisha." (2 Ki. 6:15-17) That miraculous vision was no delusion. Jehovah God did intervene, striking the Syrian military force with a temporary form of blindness and thereby frustrating their plans to take Elisha captive.—2 Ki. 6: 18-23.

[9] Thrilling indeed are the many faith-strengthening accounts of Jehovah's delivering his people. One of such remarkable deliverances, involving the use of natural forces, occurred at the time when the Israelites were oppressed by Canaanite King Jabin. Jehovah God raised up Barak to deliver the Israelites. Barak gathered a force of ten thousand men and took a position on Mount Tabor. Immediately Jabin's army chief Sisera, with a far superior force of well-equipped soldiers and 900 chariots, descended upon the plain through which the Kishon courses. Then, Jehovah God came to the rescue of Barak and his men. Evidently, by means of a flood caused by a tremendous storm, Jehovah immobilized Sisera's army. The swollen river waters turned the ground to mud. Horses and chariots sank into the mire. Sisera's soldiers fled in terror before Barak's men. "All the camp of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword. Not as much as one remained." The swollen river Kishon, augmented by its tributaries, swept their dead bodies away. As for army chief Sisera, he fled on foot and perished ingloriously at the hand of a woman, Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite.—Judg. 4: 12-21; 5:20, 21.

[10] There were times when angels figured prominently in the Almighty's great acts. "Deputations of angels" shared in bringing devastating plagues upon Egypt when Pharaoh refused to release the enslaved Israelites. (Ps. 78:43-51) Centuries later, the Assyrian army under Sennacherib threatened to capture Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of Judah. Since faithful King Hezekiah occupied the throne, Jehovah God did not permit this to happen. In one night, Jehovah's angel struck down 185,000 of the Assyrian host—"every valiant, mighty man and leader and chief." (2 Ki. 19:35; 2 Chron. 32:21) Having lost the most essential part of his army, Sennacherib was forced to abandon his plans to besiege Jerusalem.

[11] Are Jehovah's powerful angels still willing and eager to serve in behalf of his people on earth? Most assuredly! When alerting his disciples to the seriousness of stumbling others, Jesus stressed the concern of the angels in the matter: "See to it that you men do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10) Jesus' words do not necessarily mean that each devoted Christian has a special guardian angel assigned to him. But apparently angels are looking out for the spiritual welfare of true Christians as a whole. This is confirmed in question form at Hebrews 1:14: "Are they not all spirits for public service, sent forth to

9. How did Jehovah use natural forces in behalf of the Israelites in the time of Barak?

10. What examples do we have in the Scriptures of Jehovah's using angels to help the ancient Israelites?

11. What interest do angels have in members of the Christian congregation?

minister for those who are going to inherit salvation?" What marvelous aid is available to us through the angels!

12 The case of Jesus Christ well illustrates the wonderful help that Jehovah supplies through his spirit. A tremendous weight of responsibility rested on the Son of God. He knew that his Father had absolute confidence in him and had even foretold that he would remain a flawless integrity-keeper. Nevertheless, Jesus had to use his faculty of free choice. Any failure on his part would have meant eternal death for him, would have called into question his Father's truthfulness and would have ruined the opportunity for imperfect humans to be liberated from sin and death. Truly, Jesus needed the strengthening power of his Father's spirit. Completely aware of what was required of him, "Christ," says the Bible, "offered up supplications and also petitions to the One who was able to save him out of death, with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear." (Heb. 5:7) The fact that Jesus maintained his perfection to the very death proves that his Father answered his cries for aid, strengthening his Son by means of His spirit.

13 When faced with trials, Jesus Christ's loyal disciples can be sure of like help. (Jas. 1:2-5) However, as in the case of Jesus, this does not rule out individual choice. God's spirit will not force anyone to take a particular course. The individual must earnestly want the spirit's assistance. For example, a person who prays for help to resist temptation must be willing to heed the Scriptural principles that God's spirit recalls to his mind and act in harmony with them.

14 The aid that God gives may be received through fellow believers. Again, however, God's spirit is involved, for that spirit operates upon all true Christians. When, for instance, they see one of their Christian brothers in physical or spiritual need, God's spirit, operating on their minds and hearts, makes them aware that this need must be filled and prompts them to act accordingly.

15 Of course, whether any one individual in position to help will actually respond depends upon his being receptive to the urgings of God's spirit. At times individuals may fail to respond to a need because of permitting self-interest to resist the spirit's impelling power. This explains why even in the first-century Christian congregation some were far more willing and eager than were others to come to the aid of their brothers. Note what the apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians:

> "You acted well in becoming sharers with me in my tribulation. In fact, you Philippians, also know that at the start of declaring the good news, when I departed from Macedonia, not a congregation took a share with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone; because, even in Thessalonica, you sent something to me both once and a second time for my need. Not that I am earnestly seeking the gift, but that I am earnestly seeking the fruitage that brings more credit to your account. However, I have all things in full and have an abundance. I am filled, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the things from you, a sweet-smelling odor, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God."—Phil. 4:14-18.

16 Since the members of the Christian congregation vary as to the extent of their spiritual progress and since individual choice is involved, we cannot expect all to have the spirit of generosity to the same degree as did the Philippians. However, the fact that many are very sensitive

12. How does the case of Jesus Christ illustrate the marvelous help that is available through God's spirit?
13. What is required of us if we are to benefit from the help of God's spirit?
14. How is God's spirit involved in the help one may receive from fellow believers?
15, 16. (a) Why do some Christians respond more readily than others in coming to the aid of fellow believers? (b) Why are fellow believers a valuable means through which needed help comes and, yet, what should we not expect?

to the leading of God's spirit guarantees for loyal disciples of Jesus Christ a dependable avenue for aid in times of trial and stress.

17 Encouraging, too, is the fact that God's spirit can motivate persons who are not even worshipers of Jehovah to come to the aid of his servants. How is this possible? Well, man was made in God's image. (Gen. 1:28) This means that humans in general possess certain godly qualities—justice, wisdom, love, and power of a nature superior to that of animals. Humans also have the faculty of conscience, an inward sense of right and wrong. (Rom. 2:14, 15) The holy spirit can, therefore, recall things to the mind of those who are not devoted servants of Jehovah, things that will stir their conscience to act.

18 Take the case of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) in the time of Mordecai and Esther. He had given authority to Haman, one of his topmost officials, to issue a decree for the annihilation of all the Jews. Unknown to the king, this decree included his queen, Esther, who had not revealed that she was a Jewess, and her cousin Mordecai, whom Haman did not mention when recommending that the Jews be destroyed. One night thereafter Ahasuerus could not sleep and for some reason he asked for the official records to be read to him. This reading brought to his attention that Mordecai had once uncovered a plot against the king's life. On finding out that nothing had been done to reward Mordecai, Ahasuerus had his sense of justice stirred and he determined to do something about rewarding Mordecai.—Esther 3:1-15; 6:1-3.

19 Hence, when Haman arrived early the next morning to request that Mordecai be hanged, a reversal occurred. Instead of being able to make his request, Haman was forced to bestow public honors on Mordecai. (Esther 6:4-11) This was the first step in a chain of developments that led to the issuing of a counterdecree that enabled the Jews to make a stand for their lives. Obviously, God's hand was in the matter. At the opportune time his spirit evidently stimulated Ahasuerus' mind to want to have the official records read to him and thereafter to correct an oversight.

20 Others similarly witnessed the effects that God's active force had on the minds and hearts of persons in authority. Ezra the priest made the following acknowledgment regarding the support of Persian King Artaxerxes (Longimanus) for beautifying the temple at Jerusalem: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of our forefathers, who has put such a thing into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of Jehovah, which is in Jerusalem! And toward me he has extended loving-kindness before the king and his counselors and as respects all the mighty princes of the king." (Ezra 7:27, 28) Note that God's spirit evidently also moved the king's counselors and high-ranking princes to be favorably inclined toward Ezra's undertaking.

21 How encouraging is the record of Jehovah's helping his devoted servants in times past! It aids us to appreciate that needed help comes in a variety of ways. If it does not come in one way, it is bound to come in another way. The inspired psalmist declared: "Jehovah will not forsake his people." (Ps. 94:14) That was the way Mordecai felt when he and his fellow countrymen were faced with a decree of annihilation. When urging his cousin Esther to plead in behalf of her people, he said: "If you are altogether silent at this

17. What faculty can God's spirit affect even in unbelievers, causing them to act in behalf of true Christians?
18, 19. What events in the days of Mordecai and Esther illustrate that Jehovah can use unbelievers to benefit his people?
20. What experience did Ezra have with King Artaxerxes and other officials?
21. What assurance should God's past saving acts give us?

time, relief and deliverance themselves will stand up for the Jews from another place."—Esther 4:14.

22 From a human standpoint, the situation may appear to be hopeless. Relief may seem to be impossible. However, if something is God's will, nothing can prevent its accomplishment. Jehovah God made this very clear at the time the Israelites raised a cry of complaint about meat. His answer to be given through Moses was: "Jehovah will certainly give you meat, and you will indeed eat. You will eat, not one day nor two days nor five days nor ten days nor twenty days, but up to a month of days." Moses reacted to say that this was impossible: "The people in the midst of whom I am are six hundred thousand men on foot, and yet you—you have said, 'Meat I shall give them, and they will certainly eat for a month of days'! Will flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, for it to be adequate for them? Or will all the fish of the sea be caught for them, for it to be adequate for them?" Jehovah's reply was: "The hand of Jehovah is cut short, is it? Now you will see whether what I say befalls you or not." The hand of Jehovah was not too short. He caused a wind to drive an abundance of quail into the camp of Israel. —Num. 11:18-23, 31.

23 While Jehovah God definitely can work miracles in behalf of his people, we should not expect that God will guarantee us miraculous deliverance from death or violent persecution. It may serve Jehovah's purpose to allow some of his servants to die in faithfulness or to undergo terrible suffering, as did his firstborn Son, Jesus Christ. By enduring faithfully, God's servants have the privilege of proving that their worship is not prompted by selfish considerations. In this way they prove that Satan's charge, made in connection with Job, is a lie: "Everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul." —Job 2:4.

24 During the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, three Hebrew exiles in Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—expressed the right view of God's ability to aid his servants. Faced with a sentence of death in a fiery furnace if they continued to refuse to bow before an image made by Nebuchadnezzar, they courageously stated: "If it is to be, our God whom we are serving is able to rescue us. Out of the burning fiery furnace and out of your hand, O king, he will rescue us. But if not, let it become known to you, O king, that your gods are not the ones we are serving, and the image of gold that you have set up we will not worship." —Dan. 3:17, 18.

25 The preservation of any individual's life for a short time in this system is not the truly important thing. Far more vital is maintaining an approved relationship with Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. Calling attention to this, Jesus said: "He that is fond of his soul destroys it, but he that hates his soul in this world will safeguard it for everlasting life." (John 12:25) The person who sacrifices a good relationship with the Creator and his Son in order to prevent his suffering a premature death may for all time lose his soul—his God-given title to be a living being. On the other hand, one who may die as a loyal disciple of Jesus Christ is assured of a resurrection, with the prospect of everlasting life.

26 While some of us may die as individuals at the hand of men in proof of our unswerving devotion to Jehovah God, we

22. Why should we be confident in Jehovah's ability to help even when the situation appears hopeless from a human standpoint?
23. Should we expect Jehovah to deliver us miraculously from death or severe persecution? Why do you so answer?
24. How did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego express the right view of Jehovah's ability to help his servants?
25. What is more important than the preservation of a person's life for a short time, and why?
26. In doing what can we always expect help from Jehovah, and why?

can be sure that Jehovah will not forsake us. He will help us to remain his approved servants. As long as we strive to serve him, our relationship with him is secure. "I am convinced," wrote the apostle Paul, "that neither death nor life nor angels nor governments nor things now here nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38, 39) So, then, regardless of what we may face in the future, may we always rely on Jehovah's ability to help us to preserve an approved relationship with him.

Do Not BE AFRAID

"Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" —Heb. 13:6.

THE possibility of being unable to provide for oneself and one's family is a fear that for centuries has dominated the lives of many people. As it can lead to spiritual ruin, this fear is something to be resisted by servants of Jehovah God. Doing so, however, is not always easy. Besides experiencing the same problems in making a living as other people do, true Christians may be subjected to additional pressures from the world because of their faithful adherence to God's Word.

[2] The servant of Jehovah knows that the Bible condemns lying and commands separateness from the world and its ways. (Col. 3:9; Jas. 4:4) Yet his employer may want him to lie for him, misrepresent facts, promote a worldly holiday spirit, become involved in politics, or the like. The individual may be threatened with the loss of his job if he does not comply with his employer's wishes.

[3] A Christian may be running a business and find it increasingly more difficult to make a living. He may be tempted to engage in shady business practices or to misrepresent his income to gain tax advantages. While others may be doing these things, the person who is seeking to please Jehovah knows that yielding to temptation would be wrong. The Bible says: "You must not commit injustice . . . in weighing or in measuring. . . . You should prove to have accurate scales, accurate weights." (Lev. 19:35, 36) "Render to all their dues, to him who calls for the tax, the tax; to him who calls for the tribute, the tribute." —Rom. 13:7.

[4] Through study of the Bible with one of Jehovah's Christian witnesses, a person may come to recognize that what he does for a living violates Scriptural principles. This presents a real problem. It may be very hard for him to find other work. Giving up his employment and then taking

1. (a) For centuries, what fear has dominated the lives of many people? (b) What effect can yielding to this fear have on true Christians?
2. How might the demands of an employer create problems for a Christian?
3. What temptations may face a Christian who is running a business?
4. What might a person learn about his job after studying the Bible for a while?

on another job may result in lower wages and in the forfeiting of insurance, health and retirement benefits.

[5] At times, on account of governmental bans, true Christians may be faced with forcible loss of employment. The governmental authority may demand unqualified allegiance and support of the political party in power. In effect, it may demand that the state be idolized. That there would be such developments in the world is shown at Revelation 13:16, 17, where we read regarding the "wild beast," or the world's political system, that all people would be put under compulsion, "the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the slaves, that they should give these a mark in their right hand or upon their forehead, and that nobody might be able to buy or sell except a person having the mark, the name of the wild beast or the number of its name."

HOW TO RESIST THE PRESSURE

[6] One aid in resisting the pressure to compromise in the hope of securing one's livelihood is a proper evaluation of material things. At Hebrews 13:5, this encouragement is given: "Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things." A person's being content with "sustenance and covering" will make him less concerned about any losses that he might experience if he has to get another job. (1 Tim. 6:8) Also, his being content with necessities will give him a wider field of work from which to choose. Even if only low-paying employment is available to him, he should not refuse to take on such work simply because of feeling that this would be beneath his dignity. He should even be willing to try forms of self-employment that may appear very menial in the eyes of others.

[7] However, the most valuable aid in resisting the temptation to compromise when facing economic pressure is unshakable faith in Jehovah's ability to provide for those who love him. After stressing the right attitude toward material things, Hebrews 13:5, 6 continues: "[God] has said: 'I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.' So that we may be of good courage and say: 'Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?' "

[8] While men may cause a person to lose a job, they cannot prevent Jehovah God from answering the petition, "Give us today our bread for this day." (Matt. 6:11) The loss of certain material advantages does not have to mean the loss of one's livelihood. Jesus Christ, in effect, obligated his Father to care for those who put spiritual interests first and faithfully adhere to God's standard of what is right. He said: "Never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to put on?' For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you. So, never be anxious about the next day."—Matt. 6:31-34.

[9] In harmony with Jesus' words, we do well to keep in mind that each day has its own problems. So one should not add to these problems by undue worry about the next day. Why, a person cannot be absolutely sure that he will even live to see

5. How might governmental action threaten a Christian's economic security?
6. What view of material things will enable one to resist temptation to compromise in the hope of securing one's livelihood?
7. What is the greatest aid in avoiding compromise when one is faced with economic pressure?
8. Why should loss of a job for the Kingdom's sake not be viewed as loss of one's livelihood?
9. Why is it unreasonable for one to worry unduly about the next day?

the next day! Nothing in the present human sphere has any real permanence. Sickness, accident and death can quickly bring about changes that can alter one's whole routine of life. The world of mankind is indeed much like a stage, on which scenes change in rapid succession. It is just as the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "The scene of this world is changing." (1 Cor. 7:31) Of course, in most cases, a person will be alive the next day. Nevertheless, his needlessly worrying about what the next day may bring will not improve matters. If he is a servant of Jehovah, he can be certain that his God will enable him to face life's problems successfully.

[10] But what if the pressure becomes so great as to threaten one's very existence? In that case, the admonition of Jesus Christ, found at Matthew 10:28, would apply: "Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." Should ban or persecution put a Christian's livelihood in jeopardy, he would still lose out on life were he to compromise. He might get temporary relief from an extreme situation. But he could lose his title to life and go into everlasting destruction. Were he to perish at the time divine judgment is executed or should he die before then as one disloyal to God and Christ, he would forfeit the prospect of a resurrection from the dead, with eternal life in view. On the other hand, the person who dies as an integrity-keeper is assured of a resurrection from the dead. No man can stop God from restoring that individual to life. Regardless of how severe things may appear to be, the hand of Jehovah is not cut short. His record as a Provider for his people guarantees that.

10. What should we think about in the event that our existence is threatened?

GOD'S RECORD AS A PROVIDER

[11] Take the case of Jehovah's faithful servant David. King Saul became extremely jealous of David's popularity and schemed to have him put to death. Though Saul's attempts to get rid of David failed time and again, David, nevertheless, was forced to flee for his life, later being joined by some four hundred men. (1 Sam. 22:1, 2) For any Israelite to aid David and his men put him in disfavor with King Saul, since these were in the position of outlaws. Just how Saul felt about any supporters of David is evident from what happened to High Priest Ahimelech and his household. Ahimelech, thinking that David was in the service of King Saul, gave him bread and a sword. For this gesture, Saul commanded that Ahimelech and his household be killed. Only one son, Abiathar, escaped.—1 Sam. 22:9-20.

[12] The bitter attitude of Saul and of other Israelites, however, did not prevent Jehovah from using individuals to help his servants. This is well illustrated in an incident involving the rich man Nabal and his wife Abigail. David and his men had protected Nabal's flock and shepherds so that they experienced no losses. For this service, David and his associates were entitled to some consideration. Yet, when David sent messengers to Nabal, requesting whatever supplies he might be willing to give, Nabal screamed rebukes at them. But Abigail courageously threw in her lot with David, recognizing him to be God's choice for the kingship. She acted quickly in getting together abundant supplies for him and his men. Thus, through Abigail, Jehovah provided what they needed. —1 Sam. 25:9-19, 23-31.

[13] Even more remarkable is the fact that

11. What situation did David face upon incurring King Saul's hatred?
12. Did the attitude of King Saul prevent Jehovah from using individual Israelites to help David and his men? Illustrate.
13. How did David experience Jehovah's help in Philistine territory?

outright enemies of the Israelites showed favor to David and his men. David had been an outstanding warrior in campaigns against the Philistines. On meeting the returning victors, the Israelite women sang: "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." (1 Sam. 18:7) A person might think, therefore, that Philistine territory would be one of the last places where David and his men could find security. And yet they did find refuge there. Philistine King Achish was favorably impressed with David and his men, giving them the city of Ziklag for their residence. He was never able to discover that David and his men continued to be loyal Israelites. (1 Sam. 27:1-6) Achish even defended them before fellow Philistine lords and princes. Thereafter he told David: "As Jehovah is living, you are upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the camp has been good in my eyes." (1 Sam. 29:2-6) Hence, unknown to himself, Achish served as Jehovah's instrument in helping David.

[14] On many other occasions Jehovah God made the way out for David, providing just what his servant needed. Because of the marvelous way in which Jehovah had aided him, David was confident that he would never be forsaken. "In case my own father and my own mother did leave me," said David, "even Jehovah himself would take me up."—Ps. 27:10.

[15] This does not mean that David never experienced fear. He most certainly did. But he was never afraid that Jehovah would completely abandon him, leaving him in the lurch. Under inspiration, David wrote: "My foes have kept snapping all day long, for there are many warring against me high-mindedly. Whatever day I get afraid, I, for my part, shall trust even in you. In union with God I shall praise his word. In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?"—Ps. 56:2-4.

[16] Circumstances may appear absolutely hopeless. But these will not hinder Jehovah God from seeing to it that his servants receive what he feels they need. A case in point is the prophet Jeremiah. During the terrible siege of Jerusalem, he found himself in confinement as a prisoner. Food was in short supply. So desperate did the situation become that in time some women ate the flesh of their own children. (Lam. 2:20) But did Jehovah God permit his prophet to starve to death? No. The Bible reports: "There was a giving of a round loaf of bread to him daily from the street of the bakers, until all the bread was exhausted from the city."—Jer. 37:21.

[17] Then there was the time that it seemed certain that Jeremiah would perish. Judean princes falsely accused him of sedition. Yielding to them, Zedekiah delivered the prophet into their hands. They threw Jeremiah into a miry cistern, to die without food. (Jer. 38:4-6) Despite danger to himself in view of the intense hatred for Jehovah's prophet, an Ethiopian eunuch, Ebed-melech, publicly approached King Zedekiah to present an appeal in behalf of Jeremiah. Ebed-melech's appeal was given favorable hearing. With the support of thirty men, Ebed-melech thereafter rescued the prophet. For having served Jehovah's interests in this way, Ebed-melech was assured: " 'You will not be given into the hand of the men of whom you yourself are scared. For I shall without fail furnish you an escape, and by the sword you will not fall; and you will certainly come to have your soul as a spoil, because you have trusted in me,' is the utterance of Jehovah."—Jer. 39:17, 18.

14. In view of his experiences, how did David feel about Jehovah as a helper?
15. In what sense did David not experience fear when surrounded by enemies?
16. What did Jehovah not allow to happen to Jeremiah during the siege of Jerusalem?
17. How did Ebed-melech serve as Jehovah's instrument to help Jeremiah?

[18] Also, today, persons who place their trust in Jehovah experience his loving care. Hundreds of Jehovah's Christian witnesses in Rhodesia found this to be true in their case. Coming to appreciate that involvement with tobacco production violated Christian principles, these Witnesses left their jobs. This was not easy, as it meant giving up free clinical treatment, grants of land and other securities. But they were willing to make the sacrifices and have been richly blessed as a result. They found new jobs, quite a number of them with fellow believers. Many moved into areas where the message about God's kingdom had not been preached before. In this way they not only benefited themselves spiritually but also brought hope to many other people in Rhodesia. Indeed, these Witnesses experienced Jehovah's care in a very personal way.

MAINTAIN TRUST IN JEHOVAH'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE

[19] Regardless of what economic pressure you may have to face, keep in mind that Jehovah will sustain and reward his servants today just as he did in the past. He did not forget the generosity of Hebrew Christians toward fellow believers. The apostle Paul reminded them: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering." (Heb. 6:10) Especially the Christianized Jews living in Jerusalem and the rest of Judea experienced God's loving care when they faced adversity. Moved by God's spirit, fellow believers, including many non-Jews, shared in organized relief measures in their behalf. (Acts 11:28, 29; Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 9:5, 7) No question about it, those Hebrews had reasons for confidence that Jehovah would not forget them. And he will not forget us either.

[20] With Jehovah as your helper, how can you possibly fail? Make it your determination, therefore, to safeguard your relationship with him as your most valuable possession. Strive to maintain the attitude expressed in the following words of the inspired psalmist: "Whom do I have in the heavens? And besides you I do have no other delight on the earth. My organism and my heart have failed. God is the rock of my heart and my share to time indefinite." (Ps. 73:25, 26) When faced with problems, look to Jehovah to strengthen you, confident that he will aid you to remain his approved servant.—1 Pet. 5:7.

18. How did many Witnesses in Rhodesia come to experience Jehovah's loving care?
19. What will Jehovah never forget, and how should this encourage us when faced with economic pressure?
20. What should we do when faced with serious problems?

ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER 1, 1976

The annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania on October 1, 1976, will be held at Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, R.D. 3, Spring Run Road Extension, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania 15108. Through the Assembly Hall Committee, the brothers in the Pittsburgh area have invited the Society to hold its annual meeting at this newly completed Assembly Hall and the invitation has been gladly accepted. The meeting will be at 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon of Friday, October 1, 1976.

It will be appreciated if the members of the corporation will now see to it that the Secretary's Office has their present mailing addresses so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after September 1.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 15. As each member knows, he should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point as it will be relied upon in determining in advance those who will actually be personally present.

What Does the Proverb Mean?

Four Things That Are Cause for Meditation

Among "the words of Agur the son of Jakeh, the weighty message," we find the following proverb: "Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden." (Prov. 30:18, 19, *Revised Standard Version*) What element is common to all four cases here?

The eagle, a large and heavy bird, can raise itself and soar through the air with the greatest of ease, but it leaves no visible track by which to trace its flight, or to tell that it had passed by. When on sand or in grass a serpent leaves a trail. But, though having no feet, he can somehow climb to the top of a bare rock, yet leaves no trail thereon. A ship sailing on the trackless sea nevertheless finds its way and, after it passes, its wake soon is dissipated and one cannot tell that a ship has passed.

All these things are likened to "the way of a man with a maiden." The proverb evidently has reference to sexual intercourse, particularly that which is kept secret. The man and the maiden lead up to illicit intercourse, impelled by their natural desires, and using devious, specious reasoning to justify their course. Once they get to a certain point, they go ahead, throwing the consideration of consequences to the wind. Afterward, there is no visible evidence of their act. Of course, a later pregnancy or a medical examination could reveal that the girl had been violated. But, otherwise, before humans the act can be masked and kept covered. Only the Almighty God sees and knows, and judges, and he may cause it to come to light if those involved are members of the Christian congregation.

Things That Can Never Be Satisfied

With a warning to us Proverbs 27:20 reads: "Sheol and the place of destruction themselves do not get satisfied; neither do the eyes of a man get satisfied."

Proverbs 30:15, 16 contains a fuller statement of similar ideas: "The leeches have two daughters that cry: 'Give! Give!' There are three things that do not get satisfied, four that have not said: 'Enough!' Sheol and a restrained womb, a land that has not been satisfied with water, and fire that has not said: 'Enough!' "

The writer had just previously spoken, in Proverbs 30:14, about those that "eat up the afflicted ones off the earth and the poor ones from among mankind." Such ones are like leeches, which are bloodsuckers and which continue to expand as they gorge themselves with blood. These persons always demand more money, more power. The grave, likewise, is open always for more victims of death. The barren womb 'cries out,' as it were, for children. Rachel said to Jacob: "Give me children or otherwise I shall be a dead woman." (Gen. 30:1) A drought-stricken land drinks up the rain that falls on it and soon appears as though no rain had fallen. Fire, when it has devoured what is thrown into it, licks out its flames at further combustibles, and will continue to burn as long as it is fed.

All these comparisons seem to be used as illustrations of the insatiableness of greed—the fact that greedy persons never find satisfaction or rest, but are goaded on endlessly by their selfish desire, consuming anything or anyone who stands in their way.

BAPTISM
ONLY A BEGINNING

WITH Jesus, his baptism was only the beginning of his ministry. He did not view it as completing something, but, rather, as his entering into something that had to be maintained and developed. What about you? Have you been baptized in symbol of your dedication to do God's will, thus identifying yourself before others as one of Jehovah's Witnesses? Perhaps this has happened recently with you, within the last few months or in the past year or so, as is the case with many who are now numbered among Jehovah's Witnesses. How do you feel about it? Do you perhaps consider that you have now taken the main step and can say to yourself: 'That is now settled. Everyone knows that I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses, one of the "great crowd" of Jesus' "other sheep," and if I die now I can be sure of an early resurrection in God's kingdom.'—John 10:16; Rev. 7:9; Heb. 10:5-9.

It is recommended that, in congregation study of this article, the cited scriptures be read and applied as time permits.

[2] Is that a wise and proper attitude to adopt? Before considering further with respect to Jesus, let us look at an illustration, that of marriage. Whether you are married or not, you know that with many the wedding itself is looked upon as the big event, and much time and attention and money are spent in preparing for it. And then, when the event and the attendant festivities are over, these ones say to themselves: 'That is a step taken and done with. What happens after this can look after itself.'

[3] Too often young people fail to realize that getting married means entering into a relationship that has to be continually developed and safeguarded. The taking of the marriage vows and the registering of them were only a beginning. Because of having a false and short-term view of their marriage many are not prepared for the unexpected difficulties, not to mention temptations, that can arise after the first flush of pleasure and excitement is over. Feeling a measure of disappointment and frustration, either one or both of the parties may begin looking elsewhere in seeking an outlet for their pent-up emotions and passions, a satisfaction of their heartfelt longings. Hence, finally, the step that

1. (a) How did Jesus regard his baptism? (John 6:38) (b) How may some of the "great crowd" feel about baptism today?
2. (a) What illustration may assist us in reasoning on baptism? (b) What attitude do many today take toward marriage?
3, 4. (a) With regard to marriage, what have many young people failed to realize? (Matt. 19:4-6) (b) What correspondency will we now examine?

was taken and done with is now terminated and a fresh union is sought. Is that not one of the main causes for many broken marriages today, with their resultant grief and bitterness?

[4] Let us see now how there may be a correspondency between the above illustration and matters related to the baptism of Jesus, as well as to your own baptism.

A PRECIOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH JEHOVAH

[5] First, with regard to Jesus, how did he view his baptism? Little is said in the Gospel accounts of what went through his mind prior to his going "to the Jordan to John [the Baptist], in order to be baptized by him." (Matt. 3:13) Consider, however, his background. From what occurred when he was only twelve years old, we know how advanced he was in the understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures. Luke records that "the boy Jesus" was in the temple for the better part of three days, "sitting in the midst of the teachers," and that "all those listening to him were in constant amazement at his understanding and his answers." Remember, too, what he said to his mother: "Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?" (Luke 2:43-49) He obviously knew of his miraculous birth. He also likely grasped the essential meaning of what the angel Gabriel had said to his mother, Mary, when announcing the conception she experienced under the power of the holy spirit, and the God-given kingship coming to her son. Would he not also likely know the significance of Simeon's inspired utterance to Mary, that "a long sword will be run through the soul of you yourself," foretelling her agonizing grief when seeing her son on the torture stake? —Luke 1:30-33; 2:34, 35.

5. At the time of his baptism, what clear knowledge and understanding did Jesus have?

[6] From all of this we can surely conclude that Jesus, especially when approaching the age of thirty, had a keen perception of what was ahead of him. He knew that his baptism was only a beginning. A beginning of just his ministry and future reward on proving faithful? No. There was something that went along with those things, but now going much deeper. That deeper and more important and precious thing was his relationship with his heavenly Father, now taking on an added meaning, a spiritual one. This is indicated at Psalm 40:6-10, which Jesus doubtless came to realize was speaking prophetically of himself, telling of the sacrifice of his perfect human body in preference to all the animal sacrifices offered under the Law given through Moses. That this is the correct understanding is confirmed by Paul's quotation of this passage at Hebrews 10:5-9. However, despite the suffering and death involved in this sacrifice, what was Jesus' attitude, also the basis for that attitude? Notice the answer as given at Psalm 40:8: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts."

[7] How eloquently this tells, not only of Jesus' mental attitude, but also of his deep appreciation and heartfelt motivation prompting him to maintain a relationship of constant submission and devotion to his heavenly Father! He, Jesus, would always delight to do his Father's will, especially when he knew that it was the due time for him to start out on this sacrificial course. His baptism was only the first step. Thereafter he would maintain and strengthen that relationship by always seeking to please and honor his Father, come what may, "for better or for

6. (a) In presenting himself for baptism, what keen perception did Jesus show? (b) What was Jesus' attitude, and the basis therefor? (John 4:34)

7. (a) What relationship did Jesus always maintain with his Father, and what prompted this? (b) Following his baptism, how did Jesus maintain and strengthen this relationship? (Heb. 5:7-9)

worse," as is often said when a couple is taking the marriage vows. As he said to his Father when facing the final agonizing ordeal ahead of him: "Father, save me out of this hour. Nevertheless, this is why I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name."—John 12:27, 28.

[8] How, though, about you? Does the marriage illustration apply to you and help you in any way? There is no similarity, of course, when one is comparing your background with that of Jesus before he was thirty years old. Can it not be said, however, that you experienced a lot of joy on learning the truth as to what kind of God Jehovah is, "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth"? (Ex. 34:6) Did you not, like Jesus, find much delight, not only in learning of Jehovah's purpose, but also in seeing how you could fit in with that purpose? You came to realize that by taking the step of dedication you could be included along with those to whom Paul wrote: "He [Jehovah] delivered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." (Col. 1:13) Doubtless you saw, as Jesus did, that being identified as a dedicated servant of Jehovah would involve suffering. You likely experienced some trials and opposition before your baptism, but you appreciated the value of what you had learned and were determined to hold on to it.

[9] This is where the similarity to the marriage relationship comes in. Did you take a short-term or a long-term view of your dedication and baptism? Did you feel that you had done about all that was required? Or were you conscious that you had entered into a personal relationship, not with a fellow creature, but with the Supreme One of the universe, yet One with whom you could speak intimately and whom you could call on as your Father? Did you discern that you had begun something that could not be taken for granted, but that could be and must be developed and safeguarded, else it would recede and be in danger of getting damaged and possibly terminated? Did you decide that under all circumstances you would want to say, as did Jesus: "Father, glorify your name"? So the big question you need to ask yourself is: How can this most precious thing, this relationship into which I have entered with my heavenly Father, be strengthened and deepened?

8. (a) What joys did you experience in progressing to the step of dedication? (b) Like Jesus, what appreciation may you have in the face of suffering? (Mark 10:28-30)

9. (a) How does the similarity to the marriage relationship enter here? (b) At baptism, into what favored relationship did you enter, and how should you regard it? (Mic. 4:5) (c) What big question now confronts you?

BUILDING ON A SURE FOUNDATION

[10] Of first importance is the way you go about your *personal study* of the Bible, and your learning how to make a practical application of it in your daily life. Jesus always delighted to do God's will, because he could say: "Your law is within my inward parts." (Ps. 40:8) He had studied and could apply the Word of God. The same can be true of you, as mentioned at Psalm 1:1-3: "Happy is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night." Then it tells how that man will be like a tree that is ever fruitful and ever green, "and everything he does will succeed." This means much more than a mere surface reading of the Bible. It calls for a continual combing over of all that is in God's Word, as well as the spiritual food and counsel given by the "faithful and discreet slave," and then seeing what bearing this has on every aspect of your life.—Matt. 24:45-47.

[11] Do not make the mistake of thinking

10. (a) Why should you make a diligent personal study of the Bible? (b) How may you do this? (2 Tim. 3:14, 16, 17)

11. (a) What is the purpose of taking in accurate knowledge? (Phil. 1:9-11) (b) What kind of bond must we forge with Jehovah, and how?

that study is just a matter of taking in head knowledge of the technical framework of the truth. Accurate knowledge is indeed essential, but not so that you can recite from memory a lot of facts and figures. Rather, it is in order that you may be filled with "wisdom and spiritual comprehension, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him as you go on bearing fruit in every good work . . . [and] so as to endure fully and be long-suffering with joy." (Col. 1:9-11) The same as in marriage, this means a growing understanding and attachment, forging a bond that can never be broken. There was a time when the Hebrew Christians became 'dull in their hearing.' They lacked personal study and application and had need of a milk diet like babes. So note what Paul wrote to them: "But solid food belongs to mature people, to those who *through use* have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." It is not head knowledge alone, but the very spirit of the truth, "the love of the truth," that saves.—Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Thess. 2:10; 1 Cor. 8:1.

[12] Then, there is the matter of prayer. Here again the marriage illustration will help us. Is not a lack of communication the first sign of a rift between husband and wife? The root cause may not be obvious. It may be just a misunderstanding, or simply that one by temperament is shy and reserved. However, if the lack of communication persists, their relationship is bound to suffer and become strained. This can be restored only if a conscious effort is first made to reopen the lines of communication. This is not easy. One quality more than any other is required by both parties, and that is humility.

[13] How does this apply in a spiritual way? Well, leading up to your dedication and baptism there was probably no great difficulty. Your appreciation of the truth and your love for the Giver of the truth led you to take those initial steps, and in prayer you told Jehovah of your deep gratitude and of your desire to give yourself to him in unreserved and whole-souled dedication. You were starting on a new way of life. However, because of imperfection and for other reasons, that newness can wear off, as it can in marriage. A time might develop in which you find, either gradually or otherwise, that prayer has become difficult or somewhat routine. What are you going to do?

[14] Do not make excuses or try to justify yourself. That is the opposite of humility. Rather, make an honest and sincere effort to pinpoint the root cause. Is your conscience disturbed over something? That can easily hinder your prayers. Have you perhaps become somewhat careless, allowing the pressures of daily life to make too many demands on your time and attention? Is it a recurring weakness that is more deep-rooted than you realized? You may get to the point where you say to yourself: I will never be able to complete what I have begun. If the difficulty has become so serious that you feel you cannot approach Jehovah in prayer, then the only alternative is to confide in one of Jehovah's servants and request his help, preferably an overseer or someone else who is mature. This will require humility, of course, but it may not be so difficult as you imagined, and it will be well worth the effort. Even in family life, at times an older brother or sister will help a younger one to put things straight with father or mother. It can be the same in the household of God.

[15] The value of prayer cannot be over-

12. (a) What lack often damages human relations? (b) What one quality is especially required to restore good relations? (Luke 14:11)
13. In time, what problem may develop with regard to prayer? (1 Pet. 4:7)
14. If your prayers are hindered, what may you do about it? (Jas. 5:14, 15)
15. Of what benefit are heartfelt prayers to Jehovah? (Matt. 6:6)

emphasized—not the formal type, but, rather, prayer that reflects depth of appreciation for all the good things Jehovah has done for us, also for others. Yes, we want to express our loving concern for others, asking for God to help them to overcome their problems as well as to help us with our own. This will be a safeguard against becoming self-centered, which is the opposite of humility.

16 There is one other thing that is important in order to complete our building on a sure foundation, helping us to keep in mind that our baptism was only a beginning. This, too, is mentioned at Psalm 40, verses 9 and 10: "I have told the good news of righteousness in the big congregation. Look! My lips I do not restrain. O Jehovah, you yourself know that well . . . Your faithfulness and your salvation I have declared. I have not hidden your loving-kindness and your trueness in the big congregation." This was certainly true of Jesus, who was determined to finish what he began at his baptism. (John 4:34) These words of the psalmist show first a great love for Jehovah and his fine qualities and also a keen desire to see Jehovah's good name fully vindicated. They also show a true neighbor love, a sincere desire that others should know about these things, especially those with a hearing ear who would respond and help to build up the "big congregation." In taking up these words, Jesus set a fine example for us. —Matt. 9:36-38; John 17:6, 18-21.

17 One thing is worthy of note. Jesus did not carry around a written copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, yet in his teaching he continually referred to these Scriptures and quoted from them. For ourselves, it is easy to carry around the Bible in printed form. It is therefore advantageous to learn how to use the Bible itself when one is witnessing to the people. We should be concerned about people, and show that concern by calling again wherever they show interest, in an endeavor to start Bible studies in their homes.

18 There may also be opportunities for you to enlarge your field of activity, as a congregation publisher, as an auxiliary or a regular full-time proclaimer of the good news, or as a missionary or a member of a Bethel family. Of course, not every privilege of service is open to everyone, but where there are earnest desire and realistic planning, and where the individual makes his heart desire a matter of prayer, often the way is opened to share on a broader scale in doing Jehovah's will.

19 You should never feel that someone is trying to put you under pressure. But you should continually treasure in your heart all that your baptism symbolizes. As a dedicated servant of Jehovah you stand in a most privileged position. You should feel the warm interest that Jehovah's family in heaven and on earth has in you, and, as a result, you should feel stimulated to move ahead in your service to Jehovah. Do not forget. Your baptism was only a beginning.

16. (a) How does the psalmist help us to keep in mind that baptism is only a beginning? (b) How was Jesus a fine example for us?
17. How may we show our concern for people? (Luke 10:2, 5, 6)
18. In what ways may baptized ones be able to enlarge their field of activity? (1 Cor. 16:9)
19. As a baptized person, what should you continually treasure in your heart? (2 Cor. 4:6, 7)

IN COMING ISSUES

- **In Old Age I Found True Refuge.**
- **Approaching God in Prayer.**
- **Training Our Conscience to Do More for Us.**

1 and 2 Timothy —Fine Counsel for Overseers

THE two inspired letters to Timothy (as well as that to Titus) have special meaning for men in Christian congregations today. How so? In that today, even as at the time when these letters were written, we are faced with very perilous times—times when godlessness and apostasy are threatening the pure worship of Jehovah God.

Moreover, at First Timothy 3:1 the apostle Paul had written that anyone reaching out for the office of overseer was desirous of a fine work. But for a time until September 1972 there was a congregation servant who exercised general oversight in each Christian congregation, and ostensibly the one best qualified held that office; some congregation servants, in fact, holding that office for many years in succession. So how open was it for any other men in such a congregation to reach out for that work? Of course, there were also the assistant congregation servant and other assigned servants.

However, when it was appreciated that there could be as many overseers or elders as were needed in a congregation, as noted at Philippians 1:1, the office of overseer was made available to all brothers who qualified. All dedicated men were invited to reach out for this office. So what Paul wrote to Timothy came to be broadened out and more closely examined for our time.

Who was this Timothy? The Bible tells us that he had an unbelieving Greek father but a believing Jewish mother and grandmother. From earliest infancy he had been instructed in God's Word by these women. As quite a young man he was asked by Paul to join him on his missionary tours. And so as to avoid problems in preaching to the Jews, Timothy the half-Greek was circumcised. Not only did he accompany the apostle on these tours, but time and again he acted as an envoy for Paul. Timothy is also mentioned as accompanying Paul at the time that Paul wrote his letters to the Thessalonians, Corinthians (the second letter), Colossians and Philemon. Like Paul, Timothy was imprisoned because of his ministry, for, at Hebrews 13:23, we read of his release from prison.

Timothy started out relatively young to journey with Paul. However, when counseled by him not to let any man look down on his youth, Timothy must have been already in his thirties. (1 Tim. 4:12) It is quite likely that Timothy was somewhat diffident or hesitant about asserting his authority. This seems implied in Paul's instructions to the Corinthian congregation: "See that he [Timothy] becomes free of fear among you, for he is performing the work of Jehovah, even as I am. Let no one, therefore, look down upon him. Conduct him part way in peace." (1 Cor. 16:10, 11) It appears that he did

not have a robust constitution—which would help in accounting for his diffidence—for he had stomach trouble and "frequent cases of sickness" for which Paul advised his drinking wine rather than water. It could well be that the drinking water back there was not especially pure. (1 Tim. 5:23) But there was no question about Timothy's being a loyal, devoted friend and co-worker. Paul wrote of him: "I have no one else of a disposition like his who will genuinely care for the things pertaining to you."—Phil. 2:19, 20.

OVERSEERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

In writing to Timothy the apostle Paul discussed the office of overseer. What are some of the qualifications that a man must meet who would be an overseer? First of all, he must be free from blame, have only one wife, be sober, self-controlled, hospitable and qualified to teach in the congregation. He may not be a heavy drinker of wine, nor a violent, belligerent man, but gentle of disposition, peaceable. He may not be a lover of money, materialistic, and must be able to manage his own family or household well. A newly converted man would not qualify, for he likely would swell up with pride. Moreover, an overseer should be a man respected by those outside the congregation.—1 Tim. 3:1-7.

Those qualifying as assistants to the overseers, the ministerial servants, should first be tested as to fitness. They also must be free from accusation, serious, not double-tongued, not overly fond of wine, not greedy for dishonest gain but holding the truth of God's Word with a good conscience. And they, too, should be husbands of not more than one wife and manage their families well.—1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12, 13.

CONGREGATIONAL DISCIPLINE

In addition to outlining qualifications of men serving in the congregations, Paul's letter to Timothy deals with their duties, with matters of congregational discipline. Timothy as an overseer, as well as a special representative of Paul, was to see to it that the truth from God's Word was taught and not false stories and other things that do not build up. He was also to encourage prayer concerning those in high station so that Christians might lead a calm, quiet and godly life. It is God's will that all sorts of men be saved, for which reason God has provided a Mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ. —1 Tim. 1:3-7, 18-20; 2:1-6.

As regards women in the congregation, Paul admonished that they should dress modestly, manifesting soundness of mind, letting their adornment be their fine dispositions and works. Further, women are not permitted to teach men or to exercise authority over them but are to be submissive; for was not Adam created first? Women should also be serious, not slanderous, moderate in habits and faithful in all things. Widows needing support should be assisted by the congregation, provided they have been exemplary Christians over the years and do not have relatives that can care for them. And any man who would refuse to care for his own family would be worse than an unbeliever.—1 Tim. 2: 9-15; 3:11; 5:3-16.

Timothy is also to give special consideration to the older men. Those who preside in a fine way are to be accorded double honor by the congregation, with due recognition being given to their hard work in speaking and teaching. Older men are not to be severely rebuked but entreated like fathers. And accusations against them should not be admitted except on the testimony of two or more witnesses. Any who continue in sin should be reproved before all onlookers.—1 Tim. 5:1, 17-20.

It appears that quite a few slaves became Christians, and so Paul also instructs Timothy regarding these. They should give

due respect to their masters so that God's name is not reproached. Should slaves have Christian masters, they should not take advantage of this. They should give them even better service.—1 Tim. 6:1, 2.

Overseers are also to be alert to the snare of materialism. So Paul stresses the value of godly devotion with contentment. After all, we brought nothing into the world and can take nothing out of it. So, having food and clothing, all should be content. Those who are determined to get rich get into all kinds of trouble, for the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things. Those who are rich should be reminded not to boast because of their wealth but to seek to be rich in good works, generous, ready to share with those in need.—1 Tim. 6:6-19.

In all of this Timothy is to do his utmost to be a workman approved by God, handling God's Word aright. It is most valuable "for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness," enabling God's servants to be "fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16, 17.

In both First and Second Timothy, Paul was inspired to give prophetic warning of future worsening conditions. At First Timothy 4:1-3 Paul tells of some falling away from the true faith in later periods of time, forbidding to marry and teaching doctrines of demons. At Second Timothy 3:1-5 he foretells the perilous last days in which we find ourselves, when men will be lovers of themselves, of money, proud, fierce, without natural affection, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, hypocritical. Then, at Second Timothy 4:3, 4, Paul warns of the time when men will not put up with healthful teaching but will gather to themselves teachers that will flatter them rather than teach truth.

PAY CONSTANT ATTENTION TO YOURSELF

With inspired wisdom, Paul not only counseled Timothy on the qualifications of elders in the Christian congregation and how these should discharge their duties, but also showed concern for the personal conduct of his friend. Repeatedly Paul likens the Christian to a soldier. "Go on waging the fine warfare; holding faith and a good conscience." "Be training yourself with godly devotion as your aim." "Fight the fine fight of the faith." "God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind." "As a fine soldier of Christ Jesus take your part in suffering evil." And Paul speaks of himself as having "fought the fine fight" of faith.—1 Tim. 1:18, 19; 4:7; 6:12; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2:3; 4:7.

Also, Paul repeatedly counseled Timothy to display such fruits of God's spirit as love, faith, righteousness, godly devotion, endurance, mildness of temper. (1 Tim. 4:12; 6:11, 12) Additionally, Paul instructed him in his duties as an overseer: "Keep on giving these commands and teaching them." "Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching." And indicative of Paul's appreciating just what is involved in discharging an overseer's duties are his words: "A slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all, qualified to teach, *keeping himself restrained under evil, instructing with mildness those not favorably disposed;* as perhaps God may give them repentance."—1 Tim. 4:11-16; 2 Tim. 2:23-25.

Truly the two inspired letters of Paul to Timothy are filled with fine instructions for overseers! But not just for overseers, for these letters also contain excellent admonition for all in the Christian congregation regardless of their sex or station in life!

Did the "last days" that Paul describes at 2 Timothy 3:1-7 have an initial fulfillment on the Jewish system of things in the first century?

The "last days" mentioned by Paul at 2 Timothy 3:1-7 refer to the time after the apostasy had had its long day under the "man of lawlessness" referred to at 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12. All the matters mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:1-7 are 'fruits' of apostasy that are grossly apparent in our time. This does not refer to the first century, as the "man of lawlessness" was not then evident. These "last days" are therefore different from the "last hour" mentioned at 1 John 2:18, which refers to the closing period of apostolic restraint against lawlessness. This "restraint" was taken away at the death of John, the last of the apostles.—2 Thess. 2:7.

How much was the widow's 'mite'?

Jesus Christ once saw a needy widow dropping two "mites" into a temple treasury chest. (Mark 12:42, *Authorized Version*) According to the original Greek text, each of these "mites" was a *lepton*, the smallest Jewish copper coin of that time. Her contribution of two *lepta* amounted to a mere sixty-fourth of a day's wage. For this small sum a person might be able to buy half a sparrow, not enough for even one meal. (Matt. 10:29; the coin mentioned in this text is an *assarion*, the equivalent of eight *lepta*.) She contributed in expression of her love for the true God who was worshiped at the temple. Compared with her means, her small gift was far greater than that of those who contributed generously out of their surplus.—Mark 12:43, 44.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

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September 19: Do Not Be Afraid. Page 498. Songs to Be Used: 90, 116.

September 26: Baptism—Only a Beginning. Page 504. Songs to Be Used: 79, 109.